

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's

BṚHAD VAIṢṆAVA TOṢAṆĪ

Volume II

A COMMENTARY ON ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM CANTO 10



HH BHANU SWAMI

Bṛhad Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī

Volume 2 (Chapters 29 - 60)

By
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

A commentary on 10th canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Translated into English by
HH Bhanu Swami

Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited by the publishers to correspond at the following address:

His Holiness Bhānu Svāmī
ISKCON
Hare Krishna Land (off ECR),
Bhaktivedanta Swami Road,
Akkarai,
Sholinganallur,
Chennai- 600 119.

For any feedback or queries please contact the below email id.
Email: bhanuswamibooks@gmail.com
Web: www.bhanuswami.org

Text Copyright © Bhānu Svāmī
All Rights Reserved with the Author.

First ebook edition: December 2019
Published by: Tattva Cintāmaṇi Publishing

Cover Picture: Vijaya Govinda Das
Cover Design: Mohinī Mādhavī Devī Dasī

Proof-reading and editing: Harivaṁśa Dāsa, Mādhava Kiraṇa

Dedication

This book is dedicated to



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of International Society for Krishna Consciousness
who inspired the world to take up the path of bhakti.

Table of Contents

Dedication

Table of Contents

Foreword

Chapter Twenty-nine - Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs Meet for the Rāsa Dance

Chapter Thirty - The Gopīs Search for Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Thirty-one - The Gopīs Songs of Separation (Gopī-gītā)

Chapter Thirty-two - The Reunion

Chapter Thirty-three - The Rāsa Dance

Chapter Thirty-four - Nanda Mahārāja Saved and Śaṅkhacūḍa Slain

Chapter Thirty-five - The Gopīs Sing of Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest (Yugala-gītā)

Chapter Thirty-six - The Slaying of Ariṣṭa, the Bull Demon

Chapter Thirty-seven - The Killing of the Demons Keśī and Vyoma

Chapter Thirty-eight - Akrūra's Arrival in Vṛndāvana

Chapter Thirty-nine - Akrūra's Vision

Chapter Forty - Akrūra's Prayers

Chapter Forty-one - Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Enter Mathurā

Chapter Forty-two - The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

Chapter Forty-three - Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

Chapter Forty-four - The Killing of Kaṃsa

Chapter Forty-five - Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher’s Son

Chapter Forty-six - Uddhava Visits Vṛndāvana

Chapter Forty-seven - The Song of the Bee (Bhramara-gītā)

Chapter Forty-eight - Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

Chapter Forty-nine - Akrūra’s Mission in Hastināpura

Chapter Fifty - Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

Chapter Fifty-one - The Deliverance of Mucukunda

Chapter Fifty-two - Rukmiṇī’s Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Fifty-three - Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmiṇī

Chapter Fifty-four - Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī

Chapter Fifty-five - The History of Pradyumna

Chapter Fifty-six - The Syamantaka Jewel

Chapter Fifty-seven - Satrājit Murdered, the Jewel Returned

Chapter Fifty-eight - Kṛṣṇa Marries Five Princesses

Chapter Fifty-nine - The Killing of the Demon Naraka

Chapter Sixty - Kṛṣṇa Teases Rukmiṇī

About the Author-Translator

Foreword

Bṛhat Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī was completed in Śakābda 1476. Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote this elaborate commentary on the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to explain in detail what Śrīdhara Svāmī covered briefly, and to give devotional meaning where Śrīdhara Svāmī gave brahma-vāda explanations. Sanātana's commentary shows great learning and deep devotion. It conveys the sweetness that Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented to the world.

Chapter Twenty-nine
Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs Meet for the Rāsa Dance

Text 29.1

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
bhagavān api tā rātṛīḥ śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ
vīkṣya rantuṁ manaś cakre yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, upon seeing those autumn nights scented with blossoming jasmine flowers, taking shelter of his yoga-māya, decided to fulfill the desires of the gopīs.

COMMENTARY: Vyāsa performed great austerities at Badarikāśrama. As a result, Śukadeva was born as his son. Thus Śukadeva was endowed with omniscience and *prema* full of *rasa*. Because this work is uttered by him, it should be full of *rasa* in execution and result. Thus the word *bādarāyaniḥ (*son of Vyāsa) is used. And therefore it should be heard with devotion.

Śukadeva shows the principal goal of Kṛṣṇa's appearance—spreading special *prema*, through fulfilling the desires of the *gopīs*, revealing Kṛṣṇa's happiness and playing with them—in five chapters which are like the five *prāṇas*. First he shows the ingredients, his attracting the *gopīs* and his special *bhāva* that caused this.

This pastime took place at the proper time, his *kaiśora* period.

so 'pi kaiśora-kavayo mānayan madhusūdanaḥ
reme tabhir ameyātmā kṣapāsu kṣapitā hi te

Respecting the age of *kaiśora,* Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with the *gopīs* for a night of Brahmā. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

yuvatīr gopa-kanyāś ca rātrau saṁkālya kālavit
kaiśorakaṁ mānayānaḥ saha tābhir mumoda ha

Gathering the young *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa, knowing the time, respecting the *kaiśora* age, enjoyed with them. (*Hari-vaṁśa*)

Remembering his great beauty at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance. Śukadeva spoke of his great attractiveness, but was unable to express it clearly previously:

tataś ca paugaṇḍa-vayaḥ-śrītau vraje
babhūvatus tau paśu-pāla-sammatau
gāś cārayantau sakhibhiḥ samaṁ padair
vṛndāvanaṁ puṇyam atīva cakratuḥ

When Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa attained the age of *paugaṇḍa* in Vṛndāvana, the cowherd men allowed them to take up the task of tending the cows. Engaging thus in the company of their friends, the two boys rendered the land of Vṛndāvana most auspicious by imprinting upon it the marks of their lotus feet. (SB 10.15.1)

The *rāsa* dance was filled with his *kaiśora* aspects. This will be described later in the appropriate place. To represent all the *rāsa* dances, one night, the first at the beginning of his *kaiśora* period, is described.

The word *bhagavān* indicates that in the *rāsa* dance he manifested the essence of his unlimited qualities as the Lord.

Nanda and others had the highest bliss. Bhagavān, however (*api*), desired to perform a special pastime to become most blissful (*rantuṁ manaś cakre*), when he saw those nights—which were indescribable, the best of all times, filled with the highest bliss. Thus they were suitable for his pastime. The plural is used to indicate that the dance took place on many nights. That is revealed at the end. At that time, in the autumn, the jasmines were fully blooming. Though Vṛndāvana is the shelter of everything, and all flowers bloom at all times, in the autumn the jasmines and lotuses especially blossom. And they especially blossomed on those nights. That is the intention also in later saying *kumudvantam.*

Seeing the *uddīpanas* and considering it was suitable for love, he took the assistance of, or made manifest his spiritual energy, full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. This indicates the highest bliss experienced through the *rāsa* dance, superior to all other pastimes, though all the pastimes are full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. This was indicated previously in the eighth chapter concerning the infant pastimes.

Or he manifested power and mercy (*yogamāyām upāśritaḥ*) through his *rāsa* dance. Or though he always took shelter of his deception (*māyā*) endowed with self-satisfaction (*yoga*), now he did not situate himself in this *yoga-māyā*. Rather he now revealed his nature of distributing a wealth

of *prema* of his lotus feet. Or though (*api*) he usually took shelter of cheating (*māyām*) in relationships (*yoga*), as in the case of the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, now he did not cheat in this meeting. He directly met with the *gopīs*. He met with those *gopīs* who had come there.

Or though he is always served by Lakṣmī (*māyā*) who is united with him on his chest (*yoga*), she was not present during the *rāsa* dance. The *rāsa* dance is hard to attain. Or he took shelter of his flute which makes sounds (*māya*) for bringing about a meeting (*yoga*).

Or he took shelter in his mind of Rādhā, who is the conclusion (*māya*) of union (*yoga*), or who is the attainment (*yā*) of a wealth (*mā*) of union (*yoga*). *Padma Purāṇa* explains that Rādhā was the cause of the *rāsa* dance.

Text 29.2

tadoḍurājaḥ kakubhaḥ karair mukhaṁ
prācyā vilimpann aruṇena śantamaiḥ
sa carṣaṇīnām udagāc chuco mṛjan
priyaḥ priyāyā iva dīrgha-darśanaḥ

The moon then rose, anointing the face of the eastern horizon with the reddish hue of his comforting rays, and thus dispelling the pain of all who watched him rise. The moon was like a beloved husband who returns after a long absence and adorns the face of his beloved wife with red kuṅkuma.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Śukadeva describes the weight carried by Kṛṣṇa, who is compared the moon eager to enjoy with the eastern direction, and indicates the most auspicious nature of the night as the chief among all nights. The moon is described as the master of stars. This suggests that the stars rose as the family members of the moon. The east was especially colored (*vi-limpan*) by the rays colored red. This indicates it was the full moon. Kṛṣṇa developed more desire on this day than other days, by his will. That is indicated by the word *tadā* (at that time). The full moon is also the best *uddīpana* like the nights filled with jasmine blossoms, and is later indicted

with the words “the forest was colored by the rays of the full moon.” (SB 10.29.21) Not only was the east relieved of suffering by the rays of the moon but all people were also relieved of suffering (*śucaḥ*) caused by the autumn sun or by mental suffering, since by the joy or sorrow of the *gopīs* who were the very forms of the highest *śakti* and the shelter of all *śaktis*, all people experienced either joy or sorrow. It was just like the birth of Kṛṣṇa giving joy to all. The moon and the east were like a man and his beloved, who mutually enjoy because of absolute propriety and attraction. Just as the man who has not seen his followers for a long time wipes away the tears of sorrow of his followers and anoints them with his joyful hand, the moon colored the east. “Not being seen for a long time” indicates the great longing within him. All of this indicates the arousal of Kṛṣṇa’s desire to enjoy.

Text 29.3

dṛṣṭvā kumudvantam akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalaṁ
ramānanābhaṁ nava-kuṅkumāruṇam
vanaṁ ca tat-komala-gobhī rañjitaṁ
jagau kalaṁ vāma-dṛśāṁ manoharam

Kṛṣṇa saw the unbroken disk of the full moon glowing with the red effulgence of newly applied vermilion, as if it were the face of Rādhā. He also saw the kumuda lotuses opening in response to the moon’s presence and the forest gently illumined by its rays. Thus the Lord began to play sweetly on his flute, attracting the minds of the beautiful-eyed gopīs.

COMMENTARY: With the appearance of his special bhāva, he began playing his flute to attract the *gopīs*, as if using a mantra to bewitch them. *Kumut* means *kumuda* (night lotus) according to *Viśva-prakāśa*. He saw a group of blossoming lotuses (*kumudvantam*). The *gopīs* later say *vṛdnāvane kumud-kunda-śaśāṅka-ramya*: does he, who is the subject of attractive talks worshiped by all, recall those nights in the Vṛndāvana forest, lovely with lotus, jasmine and the bright moon? (SB 10.47.43)

Or *kumudvantam* can mean that he saw everything on earth (*ku*) had become joyful (*mud*) because of the rising of the moon. He desired to enjoy because of remembering the face of Lakṣmī (*ramānanābhām*). “The face of the beloved is always decorated with *kuṅkuma* but the moon is

white. How can they be compared?" The moon was red with fresh *kuṅkuma. Kuṅkuma* is an *uddīpana* for love. The time was suitable for love. Now the suitability of the place is described.

The forest everywhere was colored red or made suitable for *anurāga* with the gentle rays of the rising moon. Or the forest was smeared (*añjitam*) with the rays of the moon. This is also an *uddīpana*. He played a sweet song (*kalam*). Or he played softly (*kalam*) on his flute.

kā stry aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām
trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran

Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn't deviate from religious behavior when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of your flute? Your beauty makes all the three worlds auspicious. Even the cows, birds, trees and deer manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on the end when they see your beautiful form. (SB 10.29.40)

The sound attracted the beautiful women (*vāma-dṛśām*) or the women with crooked glances. This is a general description of the *gopīs*, since they all had this nature. The sound was attractive because of the message it conveyed or because of its *rāga* and *tāla.* This was a special song since at other times the song did not invoke the same response.

Text 29.4

niśamya gītāṁ tad anaṅga-vardhanaṁ
vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-gṛhīta-mānasāḥ
ājagmur anyonyam alakṣitodyamāḥ
sa yatra kānto java-lola-kuṇḍalāḥ

When the young women of Vṛndāvana heard Kṛṣṇa's flute song, which arouses romantic feelings, their minds were captivated by the Lord. They went to where their lover waited, each unknown to the others, moving so quickly that their earrings swung back and forth.

COMMENTARY: They heard the song which increased love (which was previously present) for the Lord.

In the last verse, the song was described as attractive. The intention of the present description of the flute is to show the intensity of the attraction. This love (*anaṅga*—without material parts) is a type of *prema* and excludes material lust completely. Or though it is without material parts, it has spiritual components. The women of Vraja, having new youth, had their minds attracted to or absorbed in Kṛṣṇa previously because of his attractive nature. Hearing this song, they went to him.

Or though they belonged to groups, they desired to go on their own unseen by others because now they had lost all discrimination, being attracted to him strongly. Or they did not form groups, but out of rivalry, which manifested as part of this special *prema*, they went alone. Or out of haste, they could not inform their friends that they were going.

They came with their earrings swaying. The word "came" is used because Śukadeva had Kṛṣṇa within himself. Thus the *gopīs* came to Kṛṣṇa who was in Śukadeva. Or because of describing the event, he also participated in going, and had a vision of Kṛṣṇa appearing close to him. Or *ājagmuḥ* can mean "they approached him." Or they went, giving up everything (*ā*). This is explained later.

They came where he, the player of the attractive flute (*saḥ*), or he who was long desired by their vows because he was their master or source of attraction (*kāntaḥ*), was standing. Or *kāntaḥ* can mean "he who produces lasting (*anta*) happiness (*ka*)."

Text 29.5

duhantyo 'bhiyayuḥ kāścid dohaṁ hitvā samutsukāḥ
payo 'dhiśritya saṁyāvam anudvāsyāparā yayuḥ

Some of the gopīs were milking cows when they heard Kṛṣṇa's flute. They stopped milking and went off to meet him. Some left milk curdling on the stove, and others left cakes burning in the oven.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Three verses (5-7) describe how they went to him giving up activities related to the body and local custom with disinterest in their bodies and related actions because of the agitation caused by the most attractive

song, since they were eager to go there with strong determination. First giving up their designated duties according to birth is described. They were milking cows but gave up milking or the milk, and went towards the song of the flute. Some went in large groups and others went with only two or three friends, since verse 44 describes that there were hundreds of group leaders. They left because they were most eager, unable to bear delay in time. This reason for going should be given for the following verses also. Others left while boiling milk and others left while cakes were on the fire. "Others (*aparāḥ*)" should be understood in all the verses. Or they left the milk boiling on the stove without taking it off, and they left cakes on the stove without removing them.

Texts 29.6–7

pariveṣayantyas tad dhitvā pāyayantyaḥ śiśūn payaḥ
śuśrūṣantyaḥ patīn kāścid aśnantyo 'pāsya bhojanam
limpantyaḥ pramṛjantyo 'nyā añjantyaḥ kāśca locane
vyatyasta-vastrābharaṇāḥ kāścit kṛṣṇāntikaṁ yayuḥ

Some of them were serving servants and friends food, feeding milk to infants or rendering personal service to their husbands, or taking their evening meals, but they all gave up these duties and went to meet Kṛṣṇa. Others were putting on cosmetics, cleansing themselves or applying kajjala to their eyes. But all the gopīs stopped these activities at once and, though their clothes and ornaments were in complete disarray, rushed off to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The previous verse describes the *gopīs* neglecting milking, boiling milk and baking cakes in the evening. Some gave up other people and proper conduct, and among them, those who gave up regular friends and servants are described first: some, giving up serving friends and servants, went.

Though they were absorbed in evening duties, they got their happiness in giving up ordinary duties, informing husbands, friends and servants.

Some gave up their objects of great affection which should not be given up —feeding children milk—and left. They were feeding the nephews, not their own children, since this would conflict with *mādhurya-rasa* (these

gopīs had not given birth to children). Next, giving up dharma is described. Some gave up serving their husbands in the form of feeding them. They gave up eating their meal.

First giving up ordinary duties, though they were dedicated to dharma and chastity, was described. Some ignored their own bodies. They did not eat. This indicates that they dedicated their bodies to the Lord's pleasure. From this it is understood that because of their absorption in *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, they did not distinguish between what is pure and impure for their bodies.

Some had been decorating their bodies with sandalwood. By giving up this they showed indifference to their bodies. Some were not aware of the correct limbs and put the ornaments on the wrong limbs. Previously this attitude was described as the *anubhāva* called *vibhrama,* a strong inclination to reject everything.

vallabha-prāpti-velāyāṁ madanāveśa-sambhramāt
vibhramo hāra-mālyādi-bhūṣā-sthāna-viparyayaḥ

When, at the time of going to meet her lover, the heroine places necklaces, flower-garlands and other ornaments in the wrong places, when agitated by the onslaught of intense passion, it is called *vibhrama.* (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 11.39)

It should be understood that their identity depended on their *prema* for the Lord, not on the dressing. But later Kṛṣṇa himself dressed them properly. In the list starting from milking, those later in the list are considered superior for having given up things more essential for the body.

Or they only gave up their duties. In putting on their clothing in reverse order they gave up the customary dress. The reason is that they were all absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. They were eager (*samutsukāḥ*). They all went close to Kṛṣṇa, who is most attractive, the son of Nanda, Śyāmasundara. They did not remain far away out of shame or because of obstacles. They came close because of the great attraction. Not only did they come close to him but they came at great speed because of his attractiveness.

Text 29.8

tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhir bhrātṛ-bandhubhiḥ
govindāpahṛtātmāno na nyavartanta mohitāḥ

Their husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives tried to stop them, but they had lost all discrimination, since Kṛṣṇa had already stolen their hearts. They refused to turn back.

COMMENTARY: Though reminded by their relatives, they lost all sense of discrimination because of attraction to the Lord. Though they were all prevented by their husbands and others, by showing them dharma and by holding their hands, they could not be stopped. They went. "Why?" They had lost all discrimination. "Why?" Because of the king of Gokula (*govinda*) or "he who rules over the senses."

Those who were scant in materials were robbed by he who was greatest in ownership.

Since their minds had been internally stolen by their internal Lord, who was most attractive and ruled their lives, they could not be stopped, just as a boat swept away by the current cannot be brought to the shore by persons on the boat or by the captain.

Their souls (*ātma*) had been stolen by Govinda. As a pun, they were thus without life (*nivṛtta, nyavartanta*). They were without purpose in living. The husbands are mentioned first since they were the chief participants in the auspicious or inauspicious actions of their wives. Then fathers are mentioned, since they had affection, and would be blamed for the irregular conduct of their daughters. Then brothers with special affection and fear of infamy are mentioned. Friends were worried about faults to the family.

rakṣet kanyāṁ pitaḥ prauḍhāṁ patiḥ putras tu vārdhake
abhāve jātayas tv evaṁ na svātantryaṁ kvacit striyaḥ

Women should be protected by the father before marriage and by the husband when they are married and by the son when they are old, or in the absence of these by other relatives. Women should never be independent. (*Yājñavalkya Smṛti* 1.85)

Four protectors are mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* verse. Sons are not mentioned, since the *gopīs* had not given birth to sons. The order of the list is from most important to less important since the later persons have less control over the relationship. Thus the husbands were the most active in preventing them from leaving, but all were involved, since they were all

family members. Or in rejecting the first members, the others feared that the *gopīs* would take shelter of them, and thus they also prevented them.

Or some were prevented by husbands who were at home. Others were prevented by parents, since they were not married.

Text 29.9

antar-gṛha-gatāḥ kāścid gopyo 'labdha-vinirgamāḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ tad-bhāvanā-yuktā dadhyur mīlita-locanāḥ

Some of the gopīs, however, could not manage to get out of their houses, and instead they remained home with eyes closed, meditating upon him in pure love.

COMMENTARY: Though some could be prevented by such obstacles, those *gopīs* attained a death-like state. The special state of all of them is shown by an example. Among those in this situation, the special condition of some among them is described in three verses (9-11).

Some situated in the house were *aṁśas* of Mahā-lakṣmī or were *sādhana-siddhas*. They were prevented by husbands in name only. Or because parents were sitting at the door, they could not leave and meet the Lord. They were unqualified. Or some *gopīs* did escape by some path to go quickly. Or they escaped through holes like birds (*vi*).

They meditated upon Kṛṣṇa, who attracted all hearts or who was the form of the highest bliss. This is also described in SB 10.31.13. They meditated spontaneously to attain their desired goal. They thought of pastimes with Kṛṣṇa or intimate enjoyment with him. Their eyes were half-closed. Or they closed their eyes for intense meditation or out of pain. Or awareness of all else ceased (*mīlita-locanāḥ*).

Texts 29.10–11

duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha- tīvra-tāpa-dhutāśubhāḥ
dhyāna-prāptācyutāśleṣa- nirvṛtyākṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ
tam eva paramātmānaṁ jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāḥ
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ

For those gopīs who could not go to see Kṛṣṇa, intolerable separation from their beloved caused an intense agony that burned away the pain of

temporary separation. By meditating upon him they realized his embrace and experienced the bliss of a sudden internal realization of meeting him. Although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul, these girls simply thought of him as an illicit lover and associated with him in that intimate mood. Thus their karmic bondage was nullified and they abandoned their gross material bodies.

COMMENTARY: Immediately they attained Kṛṣṇa. This is explained in two verses. By a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's form and qualities through meditation, they became purified of the inauspiciousness caused by pain arising from intolerable separation from their lover. They attained directly (*saṅgatāḥ*) Kṛṣṇa (*paramātmānam*), by thinking of him as their illicit lover (*jāra-buddhyā*), not by thinking of him as Paramātmā. This means that they associated with him in the highest *prema* eternally.

"Why did they give up their bodies made of *guṇas*?" This means that they attained eternal bodies beyond the *guṇas*, suitable for association in *prema* with the Lord. They attained bodies of eternity, knowledge and bliss to associate with him. They associated with him eternally in the manner of Lakṣmī or some great *śakti* eternally sitting on his chest.

There is a specialty in associating by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as an illicit lover.

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

O fortunate ladies! Although some *gopīs* had to remain in the cowherd village and so could not join the *rāsa* dance to sport with me at night in the forest, they attained me by thinking of my potent pastimes. (SB 10.47.37)

By mentioning that they were auspicious (*kalyāṇyaḥ*) and that they thought of his potency (*mad-vīrya-cintayā*), it is indicated that they attained him in a special way. That will be clear later.

The mention of intolerably sharp pain suggests pain of the greatest hell experienced for millions and millions of *kalpas*. Furthermore, the words *acyuta* and *nirvṛti* suggest that the happiness they experienced, just from one particle of the ocean of happiness arising from his embrace, was millions of times greater than the happiness of liberation or material enjoyment of ruling earth for infinite *kalpas*.

And by relating with the Lord all *vāsanās* (material impressions) were completely destroyed (*pra-kṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ*). The inauspicious elements (*aśubha*) were particular karmas which obstructed eternal association with the Lord. They also had special beneficial karmas causing happiness since the Lord submitted to their anger and pride (arising from karmas). The destruction of karmas was caused by the eternal association with the Lord. It is understood that their fortune was less than others situated there, since there was a lack of special bliss of *prema* just by separation and anger.

Or they gave up bodies even though they were made of good qualities since they could not attain Kṛṣṇa by being locked in their houses by husbands and others. They attained association with Kṛṣṇa in other, suitable bodies. *Paramātmānam* means he who is dearest. He was attained by thinking of him as an illicit lover.

Or though by meditation immediately all the locked doors (*bandhanāḥ)* were completely destroyed, they gave up their bodies even though they were made of all good qualities. Their beauty (*bhāḥ*) had been quickly (*āśu*) destroyed by the pain of intolerable separation from their lover. Or their fresh (*āśu*) beauty (*bhāḥ*) had been destroyed. By meditation they attained unfailing (*acyuta*) association with him, without separation as expressed in *mayā parokṣaṁ bhajatā:* I disappeared. (SB 10.32.21)

Or the bliss from embraces was unfailing. Or by the bliss experienced by meditation which resulted in embraces, they gave up their bodies. “Why?” They had lost all auspiciousness. Their *tilaka* and other ornaments were in disarray because of being prevented from leaving by husbands holding them back, or from contacting the doors or walls. They then thought that they were unsuitable to serve the Lord, having lost their beauty because of the pain and having spoiled *tilaka* because of the prevention.

Or by the bliss of embracing the Lord through meditation they did not destroy (*akṣīṇa*) their auspiciousness. They were endowed with qualities suitable for the *rāsa* dance by which the unlimited happiness of love would be achieved. Even then, they gave up their bodies. “Why?”

They suffered (*dhūta*) from the intolerable, intense pain of separation. They were thus most unfortunate (*aśubhāḥ*). They feared separation again,

and thus gave up their bodies.

Or they quickly (*āśu*) lost (*dhūta*) their intelligence (*bhāḥ*) because of the intense pain. Thus they immediately gave up all hope (*bandhanāḥ*), thinking, "I will attain the *rāsa* dance only by giving up my body." Otherwise, it would have been inappropriate to give up personally living in Vṛndāvana within Vraja. The fortune of other *gopīs* who lived there was greater than theirs. Since the unhappiness of separation can only be removed by permanent association with the Lord, these *gopīs* are praised for being discontented with their particular *bhāva*. By the appearance of special *prema*, special bliss arises. This is discussed in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Or they made their bodies disappear. Or they attained attachment to Paramātmā by thinking of him as an illicit lover. They destroyed the inauspicious world of three miseries by the intolerable pain of separation, since that pain was actually a constituent of the deepest *prema* for the Lord (which gives bliss). They were auspicious for the world because they nourished it (*akṣīṇa*) by their bliss from embracing the Lord through meditation. The meditation produced auspiciousness for the world since it increased its happiness. In that state, they gave up their bodies made of the conditions at that time (*guṇamaya*)—reserve before the elders, steadiness, softness, honesty, ignorance of how to leave the house, being bound inside the house—while desiring to leave. They gave up that body only. Similarly in matters of creation, Brahmā gave up his body in the sense of giving up certain *bhāvas* related to creation. That is explained in the Third Canto. Thus they destroyed the obstacles. On other days they had obstacles in attaining pastimes with the Lord internally and externally such as honesty and pain. On that night, by the bliss of his embrace through meditation, they attained liberation. But it is said later that they attained him. (SB 10.47.37) By *dāsya-bhakti* one attains Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord is controlled by *prema*. By special *prema*, by thinking of the Lord as an illicit lover one attains union with the Lord in Vraja as his eternal lover. That is the conclusion. With the manifestation of such love, the *rāsa* dance is to be relished by all completely. That is the conclusion.

Text 29.12

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca
kṛṣṇaṁ viduḥ paraṁ kāntaṁ na tu brahmatayā mune
guṇa-pravāhoparamas tāsāṁ guṇa-dhiyāṁ katham

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O sage, the gopīs knew Kṛṣṇa only as their lover, not as the Supreme Brahman with no qualities. So how could these girls, their minds absorbed in his qualities, give up their spiritual qualities and take another body?

COMMENTARY: *Śrī-parīkṣit* means he who, endowed with wealth (*śrī*), examines others. He asked for the benefit of others, not out of ignorance, not out of doubt. The *gopīs* knew Kṛṣṇa only (*param*) as their husband, or as a beautiful person (*kāntam*), or only as their illicit lover. With their intellects focused on his qualities (*guṇa-dhiyām*) like beauty, sweetness, skill and compassion, not on *tattva*, how could they destroy *saṁsāra* (*guṇa-pravāha*)? How could they get liberation, the crown jewel of human goals? *Tam eva viditvātimṛtyum eti*: knowing that, one achieves immortality. (*Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* 3.8) One destroys *saṁsāra* by knowing the truth (*tattva*) about the Lord. Liberation is rare, being the best of all. Or the Lord, lover of the *gopīs*, would also have to consider what was mentioned in the scriptures about liberation.

Or they knew Kṛṣṇa as the dearest, most attractive lover (*param kāntam*). Thus their minds were absorbed in his qualities like beauty, sweetness, skill and *anurāga*, not his *svarūpa*. How could they, the dear lovers of the Lord, who are served by devotees who deride liberation, attain utterly useless liberation? How could they attain liberation when they considered it most insignificant?

O omniscient sage (*mune*)! You know all about this. You can remove the doubt.

nātha yoni-sahasreṣu yeṣu yeṣu bhramāmy aham
tatra tatrācyutā bhaktir acyutāstu dṛḍhā tvayi

Wherever I may wander, O master, among thousands of species of life, in each situation may I have firmly fixed devotion to You, O Acyuta. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

nāhaṁ brahmāpi bhūyāsaṁ tvad-bhakti-rahito hare
tvayi bhaktas tu kīṭo 'pi bhūyāsaṁ janma-janmasu

I do not aspire to take birth as a Brahmā if that Brahmā is not a devotee of the Lord. I shall be satisfied simply to take birth as an insect if I am given a chance to remain in the house of a devotee. (*Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava*)

Since the devotees pray for birth in order to increase *bhakti*, it is improper to stop *saṁsāra* characterized by birth. Giving up a material body meant for nourishing *bhakti* out of disgust, to accept a spiritual body is not proper. They were aware of his spiritual qualities (*guṇa-dhiyām*). How could they give up their bodies which had a host of qualities like beauty (*guṇa-pravāha*) which satisfied the Lord? They would have to consider their bodies unsuitable for the Lord's service. Or they gave them up because of unbearable suffering. But it was not proper to give up those bodies.

Or though their minds were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's qualities like his beauty and fragrance or the *rāsa* dance (*guṇa-dhiyām*), how could they give up the recurrence or ever freshness of special good fortune of the *rāsa* dance, or living in Vraja, in Vṛndāvana like other *gopīs* (*guṇa-pravāha*)? What could be accomplished by giving up bodies filled with all good qualities pleasing to Kṛṣṇa? Or if they decided to give up their bodies out of lack of intelligence, how could that really occur, since their very natures were in such bodies?

Text 29.13

śrī-śuka uvāca
uktaṁ purastād etat te caidyaḥ siddhiṁ yathā gataḥ
dviṣann api hṛṣīkeśaṁ kim utādhokṣaja-priyāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: This point was explained to you previously. Since even Śiśupāla, who hated Kṛṣṇa, again achieved his spiritual body as an associate by thinking of him, then what to speak of the Lord's dear devotees.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva was like parrot endowed with wealth (*śrī-śukaḥ*), and spoke a little unclearly out of anger. This should also be considered concerning later verses. He knew that Parīkṣit understood his words very well but using his question as an opportunity, directing himself to skeptics, he answered as if in anger.

Śiśupāla hated Kṛṣṇa, the most beneficent, since he gives power to the senses to operate (*hṛṣīkeśam*), or who is most beautiful, having hair (*keśa*) shining like rays or like fine grass (*hṛṣī*).

Though he hated such a Kṛṣṇa, Śiśupāla attained a spiritual body of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Or he achieved liberation, attaining again a body of an associate, which he desired. Previously I related that to you in the Seventh Canto. What then can be said about attaining liberation for the *gopīs* dear to the son of Yaśodā, who was as if reborn under the axel of the cart (*adhokṣaja*)?

They accepted giving up their bodies out of fear of separation from their beloved, though this is not desired by the devotees.

There is another meaning. Śiśupāla achieved his desired perfection. But the *gopīs* dear to Kṛṣṇa attained eternal union with him because of fear of separation. What else can be said? Thus giving up their bodies out of fear of pain in separation is rejected.

Śiśupāla achieved perfection after three births according to the curse of the Kumāras. What then can be said of the *gopīs* achieving perfection by being dear to Kṛṣṇa? They attained spiritual bodies of eternity, knowledge and bliss, not merging in Brahman with no forms. The *gopīs* achieved that perfection. They accepted giving up their bodies out of fear of separation, caused by intense *prema*.

It was said that devotees find it unsuitable to accept a body beyond the *guṇas*. That is a particular *bhāva*, by thinking with humility. The great devotees are not too attracted to a body beyond the *guṇas* since it lacks special transformations of *prema*.[1] But it is not a fault for the *gopīs* whose minds were highly elevated with affection.

There is a third meaning. Though he hated the Lord, Śiśupāla attained his goal of again being the Lord's associate. He attained the Lord in his general form as Bhagavān (*hṛṣīkeśam*). But the *gopīs* attained him in a special form (*adhokṣaja*). They, endowed with the sweetest *prema* (*priyāḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa, the *avatarī* with great sweetness, attained the perfection of pastimes of *prema* in Vraja, like other *gopīs*. I said that they gave up their bodies, but you can understand the real meaning.

Text 29.14

nṛṇāṁ niḥśreyasārthāya vyaktir bhagavato nṛpa
avyayasyāprameyasya nirguṇasya guṇātmanaḥ

O King, the Supreme Lord is inexhaustible and immeasurable, and he is untouched by the guṇas because he is their controller. His personal appearance in this world is meant for bestowing the highest benefit on humanity.

COMMENTARY: By any relationship with the Lord all people attain the Lord, or a special *bhāva*, practiced with desire, by the power of the Lord. This is expressed in two verses (14-15). The Lord appears (*vyakatiḥ*) in the world to give *bhakti* (*niḥśreyasa*) or to give the goal of liberation (*niḥśreyasa*), *bhakti*, or to give the goal of *bhakti*, *prema*.

The Lord appears in order to give the highest benefit, because he is Bhagavān. He does not appear to kill Kaṁsa, since by moving his brow he can destroy millions of universes.

O King! Kings like you go here and there to benefit mankind. Bhagavān is described by four words. He does not decrease even by giving himself (*avyayasya*). "Why?" He is all pervading (*apremeyasya*). "Why?" He is beyond the *guṇas* (*nirguṇasya*). "Why?" He is the cause of the *guṇas* of *māyā* (*guṇātmanaḥ*).

Or the Lord is born (*vyaktiḥ*) in order to give benefit. Nothing could happen without him. He is devoid of changes such as birth (*avyayasya*). He is unlimited (*aprameyasya*). The cause of being born in spite of being unlimited is that he manifests unlimited qualities such as compassion (*guṇātmanaḥ*).

"What is the Lord's goal?" He performs pastimes which cannot be understood (*aprameyasya*). "Why?" Though he is without *guṇas*, he is the shelter of *guṇas*. He is not contaminated by the *guṇas*, being beyond the *guṇas*. Because he has *guṇas* or qualities he has love pastimes with the *gopīs*. "You should say that he appears to please us." He is the origin of qualities of people beyond the *guṇas*. By the *rāsa* dance the universe, attaining the highest *prema*, became endowed with all good qualities. This will be revealed later in the conversion between Parīkṣit and Śukadeva.

Text 29.15

kāmaṁ krodhaṁ bhayaṁ sneham aikyaṁ sauhṛdam eva ca
nityaṁ harau vidadhato yānti tan-mayatāṁ hi te

Persons who constantly direct their lust, anger, fear, protective affection, and feelings of impersonal oneness or friendship toward the Lord are sure to attain realization of him.

COMMENTARY: If people somehow direct themselves even with lust (*eva*) to the Lord who attracts all hearts or who removes all faults (*hareḥ*), they attain realization of him. Or persons like the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya by *kāma* and the Keśi and Kaṁsa by hatred attained the Lord. *Te* (your) can also modify *harau*: they direct themselves in hatred to your Lord. Another version has *vidadhate.*

Hi means certainly. They become fixed in the Lord (*tan-māyatām*) or they attain *sārūpya*. By practicing (*nityam*), they attain absorption in the Lord. If they only concentrate on the Lord occasionally, by that lack of absorption they will not quickly attain the Lord. There are two forms of *sārūpya:* one for the devotee and the other for the nondevotee. For the devotee *sārūpya* gives happiness and for the nondevotee it gives destruction of suffering only. The devotee attains Vaikuṇtha and the nondevotee attains siddhaloka (merging in Brahman).

Or the Lord appears in order to benefit humanity. This verse explains how he does this. Those who direct lust, etc., to the Lord attain absorption in him. One version has *vā* with *sauhṛdam*. As with friendship, so by hatred, etc., one can attain absorption in the Lord.

kāmād dveṣād bhayāt snehād yathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ
āveśya tad-aghaṁ hitvā bahavas tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

Just as by *vaidhi-bhakti* one can attain one's spiritual goals*,* many persons have attained suitable forms after asorbing their minds in the Lord out of lust, hatred, fear, and family relationships filled with affection, and after giving up absorption in enmity of the Lord (in the case of hatred and fear). (SB 7.1.30)

By external vision, the *gopīs* could be said to have *kāma* with Kṛṣṇa as an illicit lover.

Or all are grouped together simply to express absorption in the Lord, but there is a great different in the result for the different persons. This is described in *Bhāgavatāmṛta* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.* The great devotees also clearly describe the differences. This will be explained later in the appropriate place.

Text 29.16

na caivaṁ vismayaḥ kāryo bhavatā bhagavaty aje
yogeśvareśvare kṛṣṇe yata etad vimucyate

You should not be so astonished since he is Bhagavān, the unborn master of all masters of mystic power, endowed with the complete manifestation of qualities, and liberates this world.

COMMENTARY: Others may be astonished, but you should not be, since from the time in the womb you have known the glories of the Lord. Śukadeva uses the word *bhavatā* out of respect. The reason why there should be no astonishment is given. He is endowed with unlimited qualities (*bhagavati*). "How then was he born in the womb of Devakī?" He is actually unborn. He is not born like the *jīvas* but, by his own will, out of affection for his devotees. Because he is endowed with all powers, he is the master of all masters of yoga. Among the different forms, Kṛṣṇa, the complete manifestation of all qualities, has made his appearance.

"Then how does he appear to be the son of Devakī?" He is the lord of lords who are able to easily do what is most difficult to do (*yogeśvareśvare*). Appearing by his own will, by his special *śakti,* he becomes the son of Devakī. It is because of his *acintya-śakti*, because he is Kṛṣṇa, *para-brahman* in human form, or because he is famous as the ocean of sweetness with inconceivable, infinite glories. Or he is the Supreme Lord (*bhagavate*), without material birth like *jīvas* (*aje*). He appears by his mercy. Therefore he is the master of the *bhakti-yogīs* like Nārada, to be served with devotion, since he is a special manifestation of *bhakti*.

Or he is the master of those having great, astonishing powers, since he displays the most astonishing, unlimited powers. And still he is Kṛṣṇa, the joy of Gokula. Because of him (*yataḥ*), moving and nonmoving beings, though without *sādhana*, just by his will, by some relationship, are

especially liberated—i.e. attain Vaikuṇṭha. This indicates that the trees and creepers of places like Indraprastha would attain Vaikuṇṭha. Kuntī says:

ime jana-padāḥ svṛddhāḥ supakvauṣadhi-vīrudhaḥ
vanādri-nady-udanvanto hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ

This thriving land, filled with ripe herbs and fruit-laden trees, forests, mountains and rivers, has grown prosperous by your glance. (SB 1.8.40)

The word *suvṛddhāḥ* (ever increasing) indicates that they were qualified for Vaikuṇṭha.

Or "Since it is very difficult to attain the Lord by sacrifices, yoga and other processes, how can he be attained just by lust or hate?" Nothing is astonishing for the Lord. Even liberated souls should not reject hearing about the *rāsa* dance, thinking it is filled with material lust. Rather, the topic is honored at all times as the highest result by devotees for attaining the highest perfection. This confirms the conclusion previously stated on this topic.

Or because of good fortune as *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa, these *gopīs*, destroying all obstacles, in that body immediately attained Kṛṣṇa's association and the *rāsa* dance. Placed in their houses by their husbands, being bound by ropes (Verse 9), they were not able to leave. Thinking of participating with Kṛṣṇa in the *rāsa* dance, they destroyed their bondage of ropes by the power of meditation. By meditation they gave up their bodies bound with ropes by their husbands (*guṇamaya*). They each thought, "I am not bound up, but free." Giving up bodies refers to giving up ways of thinking as in the case of Brahmā giving up various bodies at the time of creation. By meditation they freed themselves from the ropes or from the locked doors. In this sense, they gave up their bound-up bodies. They then associated with the son of Nanda, though he was also Paramātmā, because of thinking of him as their illicit lover (*jarā-buddhyā*).

Or because he was most dear (*paramātmānam*) they thought of him as their lover. Otherwise they could not realize him as most dear. This was accomplished by the power of meditation. They made the suffering of material existence insignificant by the intense, intolerable pain of separation and they made the happiness of material existence insignificant by the happiness of Kṛṣṇa's embrace.

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

O fortunate ladies! Although some *gopīs* had to remain in the cowherd village and so could not join the *rāsa* dance to sport with me at night in the forest, they attained me by thinking of my potent pastimes. (SB 10.47.37)

The meaning of the above verse is this. They remained in Vraja (*āsthitāḥ*) because they were tied up by their husbands. Still, by the power of thinking of me, they attained the *rāsa* dance.

Parīkṣit then asks, "How did they give up the bondage of ropes (*guṇoparama*) by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their lover with qualities, not being beyond qualities?" Śukadeva answers. Just as by meditation one becomes free from the bondage of *saṁsāra*, by special meditation, the *gopīs* became free from the bondage of ropes. What can be said? Even those who hate the Lord can attain their goals.

Text 29.17

tā dṛṣṭvāntikam āyātā bhagavān vraja-yoṣitaḥ
avadad vadatāṁ śreṣṭho vācaḥ peśair vimohayan

Seeing that the girls of Vraja, attracted by his flute, had arrived, Kṛṣṇa, the best of speakers, greeted them with charming words that bewildered their minds.

COMMENTARY: He saw the women of Vraja, agitated, attracted by his flute (*tāḥ*). They were all at the age of fresh youth. Or he saw the women who should have remained in Vraja and should not have gone out of their houses. And they also came close to him. They did not remain at a distance out of shyness. He spoke to them with words like "Welcome." (SB 10.29.18) He spoke words with playfulness (*peśaiḥ*), stealing their hearts to the extreme (*vimohayan*), in order to increase the desire in their hearts. That will be clear later.

"How could he bewilder them just by skillful words?" He was the best among poets like Vyāsa or eloquent speakers like Brahmā with four heads. He was filled with all powers (*bhagavān*).

Or he spoke with some deception of words (*peśaiḥ*). He was skillful at cheating: his words could be interpreted in two contrary ways—as indifferent or requesting association. Though he showed support for dharma, he had a desire to enjoy. Thus he strengthened the *gopīs'* love for him through those words, since he was the best speaker.

Or his desire to enjoy with them was evident in SB 10.29.1 and 3. But he hid that and bewildered them with words about dharma, though his mind was otherwise, and with words which had a different meaning since they could not discern the true meaning of his words. Actually, he bewildered them by the beauty or skill of his words, not by an inappropriate *bhāva*.

Or though the women of Vraja, and those who were there now were endowed with natural *prema* for him, and thought they had come close to him now, though he saw them, though he knew their love since he was Bhagavān, he confused them by speaking deceptive words. "Why?" He was the best among those who speak skillfully with jokes. He bewildered them as a joke.

Or he spoke with skillful words so that they would hear him. Or he bewildered them with his beauty and then spoke. "Why?" They did not speak (*avacaḥ*) out of shyness. He spoke to get bliss from hearing their answers since he was the best among those skillful at word play. He thus enjoyed hearing their skillful words. All of this was for the purpose of increasing his and their *bhāva*.

In writing the meaning of the words of he who is most skillful, spoken to the *gopīs* worthy of worship for their skill, they and he are my only goal. I have no other shelter.

Text 29.18

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgāḥ priyaṁ kiṁ karavāṇi vaḥ
vrajasyānāmayaṁ kaccid brūtāgamana-kāraṇam

Kṛṣṇa said: O most fortunate ladies, welcome. What may I do to please you? Is everything well in Vraja? Please tell me the reason for your coming here.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

First he speaks politely, showing external indifference. Your coming is very auspicious. Or, have you come comfortably here? O fortunate women with husbands (*mahā-bhāgāḥ*)! What could I do to please you? It is not possible for me to do anything. Or, what can I do for you, please order me. By treating you married women nicely, I will gain special merits in dharma. Previously he said the same thing to the *brāhmaṇas'* wives with reverence. *Svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgā āsyatāṁ karavāma kim:* Welcome, O most fortunate ladies. Please sit down and make yourselves comfortable. What can I do for you? (SB 10.23.25) But he showed indifference, stating "I can do nothing." Now however, by using the words *priyaṁ kim,* he indicates his own longing. On seeing them come, however, he was actually most pleased and thus welcomed them. He called them most fortunate because they came there depending on him alone, giving up everything else. The phrase *mahā-bhāgāḥ* indicates that he recognizes the greatness of their *prema*, on thinking of their sentiments, since he is dependent on his dear devotees. *Bhāgāḥ* means "worshippers" in this context. By saying *priyam* he indicated that he was controlled by their *prema*. This was natural, though he was skillful at bringing his devotees under his control since he was the crest jewel of cleverness. In this way the real meaning of his words can also be understood in later verses he speaks.

In this verse Kṛṣṇa then uses joking words. Using polite words at the beginning of his speech, he showed his qualification to speak to an assembly of people. Seeing that they had all gathered at one time with devotion, he then inquired deceptively as if being fearful and respectful. Is everything well in Vraja? "O lion of cleverness! If there were some problem the cowherds would have come here." He then speaks arrogantly with false anxiety. "There must be some problem concerning women for some of the cowherds. Please tell me the cause or goal in your coming here."

Or seeing them standing there without answering out of shyness, unable to understand his intentions, indicating that they did not speak because of some inauspicious lamentation that should not be heard, to change the topic he asks as if puzzled, "Is everything well in Vraja?" But it should be understood that all the worry is just a deceptive show. Seeing the *gopīs* not

speaking and smiling, acting as if he were pacifying them, he says shyly, “Please state the reason for you coming since I cannot understand it .” It was already explained that each of his words is filled with indifference and prayer. The indifferent aspect of his words was explained. The prayerful aspect will now be described. It will also be described in subsequent verses.

O most fortunate women! You are fortunate because of the moonlight, the forest, your beauty and favorable followers. In the form of questions, he step-by-step makes his request. Have you come here with ease? He makes his request: what actions can I perform to please you? I request to do what is most dear to your hearts. When they did not reply, he again requested gradually by saying “Is everything well in Vraja?” He again requests “Please tell me why you have come. Do not be shy.”

Text 29.19

rajany eṣā ghora-rūpā ghora-sattva-niṣevitā
pratiyāta vrajaṁ neha stheyaṁ strībhiḥ su-madhyamāḥ

This night is quite frightening, and frightening creatures are lurking about. Return to Vraja, slender-waisted girls. This is not a proper place for women.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Fearing their skill at arguing, Kṛṣṇa emphasizes the fearful nature of the night (*eṣā).* It is not proper for women of good families to come to the forest at night. “It is not a fault to come in a group, and how can there be a fearful night in Vraja?” But the night is full of darkness (*ghora-rūpā*). And this is not Vraja, since here you have no help, whereas in Vraja there is help. And it is completely filled with wild animals. Therefore return to Vraja. And do not delay. It is not proper to stay here. “But Kṛṣṇa, how can you stay here?” You are women. Men are not weak like women. O women with slender waists! It is not proper for women with good qualities and beauty to remain here according to the logic of “Where there is beauty there are good qualities.”

Or the *gopīs* say, “O king of *rasikas*! You, like us, have gathered here for play. We have come to gather flowers.” Fearing they would say this, he speaks. The night is dark. This is not in Vraja and at night, not in the day. “What fault is there in performing the *rāsa* dance?” But it is dark. “O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa! This night is filled with moon light.” It is filled with wild animals.

Or he says, “You as a group should enjoy the night with your husbands. I alone cannot act properly with so many women.” O most fearful boy! We are not afraid of wild animals. “But you beautiful women will be fearful of those who are stronger.” Actually he speaks in this way to reveal the love that that *gopīs* have for him and to increase longing by joking.

As a pun, the meaning is as follows. Do not return to Vraja since the forest is frightening. This full moon night delights all people. No one should go back, since it is dark and filled with wild animals. You should stay near me, since I am strong.

Or this night is not dark since the darkness has been removed by the moon light. Since Vṛndāvana by its nature is without darkness or fear, and the night has become like day because of the moonlight, the night is served by the cuckoos, bees and other peaceful animals. Or, the night gives great fear because of evil elements but that is now transformed since it is served by me, who am strong (*sattva*). This produces fear in all others. He says this to pacify the *gopīs.* Seeing the *gopīs* remaining in the back listening to his words and returning his smile, he again spoke. Do not return to Vraja. Remain here. It is suitable for women like you to stay here. Since you are most beautiful with thin waists, it is proper to stay near me.

Text 29.20

mātaraḥ pitaraḥ putrā bhrātaraḥ patayaś ca vaḥ
vicinvanti hy apaśyanto mā kṛḍhvaṁ bandhu-sādhvasam

Not finding you at home, your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are certainly searching for you. Don’t cause anxiety for your family members.

COMMENTARY: “O lion among men! By being close to you, the strongest, why should we fear?” Fearing such a response he answers. Mothers are

mentioned first because of their great affection. But they cannot wander about in the forest much. Thus fathers are mentioned. They will search out of affection and fear of defamation of the family. These options are without differentiation if they are married. If mothers and fathers are lax, then persons who act like sons will search, because of shame at the fault of their "mothers." They may not search, to hide the illicit act of their mothers or to avoid seeming to be too bold, or, being very young, they would not be able to wander in the forest. Brothers would then search out of great affection. They may also desist out of shame or for other reasons. The husbands would then search, because they share the faults of their wives. In the list the later ones mentioned are more excellent for searching. Among them, the husbands would necessarily come.

Or some mothers would search for some daughters, some fathers would search for their daughters, etc., according to who was in the house. Or for any of the reasons mentioned, in some cases mothers would search, or in some cases fathers would search. All of them, not seeing the women in the house or forest, would search, going here and there. *Hi* indicates conjecture. If they should come here and see you at my side, you and I would have shame and fear. Do not create fear for me or for your family members by staying here.

Or "O knower of the great mantra! They will not come to this inaccessible forest. Even if they come, they will not see us." He speaks in response to such a statement. Do not create worry for your relatives who are in anxiety about your safety from tigers and other animals, when they realize you are not at home. You should return home out of affection for them. *Sādhavo bandhu-vatsalāḥ*: cultured people are affectionate to relatives. (SB 11.2.6)

Or not seeing me (*mā*), they will search only for you (*vaḥ*). "O fearless lion! Let them search and let them find us. So what?" You have produced (*akṛḍhvam*) fear in your relatives. The past tense is used to indicate that it would necessarily happen. If you do not return, you will be known as independent and full of fault.

Or "O person with great vows! Being at your side, we will not have fear." Fearing such a statement, he speaks while closing his eyes and gesturing. (verse 19) Women should not remain here (*iha*) at my side. I avoid

association with women since I am a *brahmacārī* from childhood. Even if they are young or old, one should not associate with women. But you have arrived at the age of fresh youth. O beautiful women!

"You are really deceptive. You associated with us in your home many times." In the lonely forest (*iha*), at this time in the evening, there is fault. He makes a face. By association with you I will be defamed. You must go away. "O famous one! No one will know. Do not fear defamation." But your mothers and fathers will search for you. (present verse) Certainly they will come and see you. Do not create fear in my relatives by having me break my vows.

Or your (*vaḥ*) mothers and fathers, fearing that you have left the house and come to me, and not seeing me anywhere, being close by, will search. Coming here, seeing me with you, you will produce fear for my relatives who will be angry with you for destroying my fame.

Actually he spoke in this way, instilling fear of their elders, to take them far away to a secret place.

Or by a play on words, he made them lose fear of their relatives, with indifference to them.

Hi means certainly. As if blind, they will search and not see you, though they will look in many places. That is certain (*eva*). Or *hi* means although. Though they will not see you, will they search for you? No. Do not have fear from relatives. Be indifferent to them.

Texts 29.21–22

dṛṣṭaṁ vanaṁ kusumitaṁ rākeśa-kara-rañjitam
yamunānila-līlaijat taru-pallava-śobhitam
tad yāta mā ciraṁ goṣṭhaṁ śuśrūṣadhvaṁ patīn satīḥ
krandanti vatsā bālāś ca tān pāyayata duhyata

Now you have seen this Vṛndāvana forest, full of flowers and resplendent with the light of the full moon. You have seen the beauty of the trees, with their leaves trembling in the gentle breeze coming from the Yamunā. So now go back to the cowherd village. Don't delay. O chaste ladies, serve your husbands and give milk to the crying babies and calves.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

When the *gopīs* out of anger mixed with love glanced elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa interpreted that glance in another way. The two verses are connected. By glancing away in anger, you have seen the forest with flowers. Looking upwards you have seen it lit by the moon. Looking towards the Yamunā you can understand that the leaves tremble from its breezes.

Or, "We are indifferent to our relatives, since we have disobeyed their bewildering orders. Then why should we have fear?" He answers with these verses. But what is the purpose of coming here at night with such effort? Craftily, he meditates for a moment and then says, "Ah! I understand. By good fortunate you have come to see the beauty of my Vṛndāvana in the night. That is fine. Now you have done so." With his finger he points out everything. "You have seen the flowering trees, colored by the moon, trembling in the breeze of the Yamunā." The real meaning is as follows: your love will increase by seeing the forest in this condition.

Another meaning of verse 21 is as follows. Not only are you free from fear at this place, but in this place you can find real happiness. He points out the *uddīpanas* for love personally. You have seen the forest endowed with all qualities. Therefore, do not return to the village.

Since you have fulfilled your desire of seeing the beauty of the forest (*tad*), do not delay and go to the village (*goṣṭham*) roaring (*ghoṣayati*) with the sounds of cows and songs while churning the yogurt. Or, go to the place where the cowherds live, where everyone makes a living by herding cows. *Ghoṣam* is sometimes seen instead of *goṣṭham.* It is proper that all of you go there, since you are cowherd women. Do not delay to serve your husbands, since you are all chaste *(satīḥ*). Otherwise you will not be considered faithful to them. It is not proper to remain with me though I am the Supreme Lord.

The *gopīs* say, "We should give up husbands who hate and cannot tolerate our service to you, who are most worthy of service. Worshipping your lotus feet, we reject service to our husbands completely." Fearing such a response, Kṛṣṇa again speaks, taking shelter from the viewpoint of

compassion, to produce pity for the children and calves who are crying. You must feed the calves and milk the cows for the children. The cows out of affection show trust when you come close to them.

The truth is this. *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says *sa vo hi svāmī bhavati:* Kṛṣṇa is your husband. *Brahma-samḥitā* says *śriyaḥ kāntāh kāntaḥ parama-puruṣah*: there are many *gopīs* and one lover, Kṛṣṇa. The ten-syllable mantra and the *śruti* and *smṛti* statements also show that these *gopīs* were the wives of Kṛṣṇa. *Bhāgavatam* says *kṛṣṇa-vadhvaḥ*: they are the wives of Kṛṣṇa. (SB 10.33.7) It is not possible that these supreme Lakṣmīs could marry anyone else. The *gopīs'* perception that they were married to others was arranged in order to increase their longing for Kṛṣṇa. Just as Kṛṣṇa took shelter of *yoga-māyā* for the *rāsa* dance (SB 10.29.1), so the perception that they were married to others arose from *yoga-māyā.* By making false forms of the *gopīs,* he fooled the cowherds who thought that they were husbands of the *gopīs.*

nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyayā
manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vrajaukasaḥ

The cowherd men, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency, thought their wives had remained home at their sides. Thus they did not harbor any jealous feelings against him. SB 10.33.37

Since the real *gopīs* had no intimate relations with their husbands, they did not have children. The children mentioned in this verse are children belonging to their brothers and others. They treated these children as their sons and thus protected them. In the following verse as well, the word "son" is used to indicate Kṛṣṇa's son Sāmba, though in the verse he is mentioned as Balarāma's son (*sa-sutaḥ*):

pratigṛhya tu tat sarvaṁ bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ
sa-sutaḥ sa-snuṣaḥ prāyāt suhṛdbhir abhinanditaḥ

Balarāma, chief of the Yādavas, accepted all these gifts and then departed with his "son" (actually Kṛṣṇa's son) and daughter-in-law as his well-wishers bid him farewell. SB 10.68.52

Since they did not have breast milk, they fed their brothers' children cow milk (*tān pāyayata*). In verse 6 of this chapter, it was said that some *gopīs* were feeding the infants milk. This does not mean that they fed their own

children their breast milk, but rather that they were feeding other children cow milk. If these had been children born from their wombs, it would have been improper that these women become leaders in the dancing and singing in the *rāsa* dance. The *rasa* of that dance would have been destroyed. The sons who went looking for these *gopīs* in the forest in the night must have been much older, and thus their mothers must have been middle-aged. The *gopīs* were thus not the mothers of the sons mentioned in this chapter. Vaiśampāyana says *yuvatīr gopakanyāś ca rātrau saṅkālya kālavit:* Kṛṣṇa met with the young daughters of cowherds in the night. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) And Śukadeva has described the *gopīs* who came as the most beautiful *uddīpanas* for the dance. Remembering the beauty of these *gopīs* as *ālambanas* along with the *uddīpana* of the night with the moon, Kṛṣṇa decided to perform the *rāsa* dance (SB 10.29.1). Śukadeva also states that they were younger than Kṛṣṇa.

tatrātiśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
madhye maṇīnāṁ haimānāṁ mahā-marakato yathā

A tumultuous sound arose from the armlets, ankle bells and waist bells of the *gopīs* as they sported with their beloved Kṛṣṇa in the circle of the *rāsa* dance. SB 10.33.6

vyarocataiṇāṅka ivoḍubhir vṛtaḥ: among the assembled *gopīs*, the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared just like the moon surrounded by stars. (SB 10.29.43) *Taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ:* Kṛṣṇa's young consorts shone like streaks of lightning in a mass of clouds. (SB 10.33.7)

Thus when Kṛṣṇa directly says that they have children, he is joking, not finding fault in them. Joking is evident when it is said that he bewildered them by his clever words. *Prahasya sa-dayaṁ gopīr ātmārāmo 'py arīramat:* joking with the *gopīs* he enjoyed with them. (SB 10.29.42) Thus the present verse when he speaks of children it is a joke, using imaginary words. If the words were true and thus critical of the *gopīs*, the greats distaste in *rasa* would arise, just as it would be unsuitable to criticize water and then drink it. Poets accept proper behavior in the hero. Thus the supreme hero Kṛṣṇa who appeared for showering the most excellent *rasa* of his pastimes, praised by the greatest poets, would not act in such bad taste.

anugrahāya bhaktānāṁ mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ
bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍa yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet

When the Lord assumes a humanlike body to show mercy to his devotees, he engages in such pastimes as will attract those who hear about them to become dedicated to him. SB 10.33.36

evaṁ śaśāṅkāṁśu-virājitā niśāḥ
sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ
siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-sauratāḥ
sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ

Although the *gopīs* were firmly attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always fulfilled, the Lord was not internally affected by any mundane sex desire. Still, to perform his pastimes the Lord took advantage of all those moonlit autumn nights, which inspire poetic descriptions of transcendental affairs. SB 10.33.25

Thus the husbands were apparent only and the "sons" were sons of others.

Another meaning of verse 22 is as follows. Therefore since you have no fear of relatives and all ingredients and beauty of the forest are present, do not go quickly. If you go, go only after a great delay, after the end of the night. The word *ca* indicates that *mā* (do not) should be applied to the other verbs in the sentence. O chaste women! Do not serve your husbands and do not go there. He jokes in order to destroy the happiness of their independent decisions. The calves and children are not crying. Therefore do not feed them. This also indicates their independent nature.

Text 29.23

atha vā mad-abhisnehād bhavatyo yantritāśayāḥ
āgatā hy upapannaṁ vaḥ prīyante mayi jantavaḥ

On the other hand, perhaps you have come here out of your great love for me, which has taken control of your hearts. This is of course quite commendable on your part, since all living entities possess natural affection for me.

COMMENTARY: On seeing that the *gopīs* had become angry, Kṛṣṇa then further agitated them by giving a general example of living entities in order

to make them return home. On the other hand, instead of coming to see the beauty of the forest, perhaps you have come out of general affection for me, not because of the attraction between a woman and a man. He shows great indifference. You come out of affection for me because (*hi*) all living beings show affection for me. By directly mentioning affection, he dilutes its force. He uses the word *bhavatyaḥ* to indicate great respect for them. Or, he fears the *gopīs* would say, "We have given up our relatives, so why mention them at all." In response Kṛṣṇa speaks the verse, praising himself.

Actually he shows indifference in order to increase their love by his skillful play. Another meaning of the words is as follows. Though you have come with some other goal, please take rest for a moment at my request. Out of great *rati* for me you have come. If so, that is very suitable since all beings have affection for me. What then to speak of you who have such love for me. He addresses them as *bhavatyaḥ* out of respect for their *prema*. Now please enjoy with me as you wish.

Text 29.24

bhartuḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ strīṇāṁ paro dharmo hy amāyayā
tad-bandhūnāṁ ca kalyāṇaḥ prajānāṁ cānupoṣaṇam

The highest dharma for a woman is to sincerely serve her husband, behave well toward her husband's family and take good care of her children.

COMMENTARY: Serving is dharma and if serving is done purely or according to dharma it is excellent (*para*). *Hi* means certainly. (After serving husband) one should serve relatives, mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law. After that (*anu*), one should take care of others—children, servants and sons. That is also dharma. If it is done purely, it is excellent (*para*). The two words *ca* indicate that the service to relatives and children are equally important. O chaste women (*kalyāṇyaḥ*)! You should do this. Or O women who can see what is auspicious! You should do this. He incites them with a cheating intention.

Or it is good that you have come, but I am to be obtained only by the highest dharma and not otherwise. Making them understand by a gesture

of teaching them, he then recites this verse. It is actually a joke, said with anger, since what is stated is not the highest dharma.

There is another meaning, also a joke. The Lord is attained by *bhakti* with *śravaṇa*, etc., culminating in *prema*, which makes *artha, dharma, kāma* and *mokṣa* insignificant. He cannot be attained by serving husbands, etc. Thus the statement about the highest dharma in the verse is a joke. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya*: give up all dharmas. (BG 18.66)

There is another meaning. The highest dharma is not only serving the husband but also his friends like me. Or O highest devotees (*kalyāṇyaḥ*)! That is the highest dharma for other, materialistic women, not for you, the best of all women. Those who practice *bhakti* have no respect for *sva-dharma*. *Tyaktvā svadharmaṁ caraṇāmbujaṁ hareḥ*: giving up one's dharma for the worship of the lotus feet of the Lord is without fault. (SB 1.5.17) This is also described in many places in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa,* in the discussion of the qualities of the devotee.

Or I am the master of the universe (*bhartuḥ*). Since I am Paramātmā I am really the *bhartṛ* or maintainer. Service to me is the highest dharma. Or since I protect the cowherds from rain, I am the maintainer of all persons here. The highest dharma is serving me (*bhartuḥ*). You should serve also my relatives like Balarāma or Nanda. Even nourishing my servants (*prajānām*) like Śrīdāmā or the servants of Nanda or all devotees, is the highest dharma. Thus you should serve me purely.

Or it is proper that you have come here for the *rasa* of the Lord. (previous verse) Many words that follow show how it is proper. Service to me is the highest dharma, etc. This expresses his form of power.

Or hear about the essence of all dharmas. Then in three verses (24-26) he speaks in a joking way about the duty to husbands, etc. For you women of Vraja, serving husbands is *adharma* or sin. Doing it purely is the greatest sin, *para adharma*. If devotees give up their dharma of hearing and chanting and take to serving husbands, it is a great *anartha*. Thus Gītā says: *svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvaḥ*: attaining death in the course one's duties is beneficial (leading to heaven) whereas performing others' duties is full of danger (leading to hell). (BG 3.35)

Or serving husbands with cheating to me (*a-māyayā*), giving up *bhakti* to me, is *adharma*. All *karmas* performed without *bhakti* are useless and give opposite results.

kiṁ vedaiḥ kim u śāstraiḥ vā kiṁ vā tīrtha-niṣevaṇaiḥ
viṣṇu-bhakti vihīnānāṁ kiṁ tapobhiḥ kim adhvaraiḥ

Without devotion to the lord what is the use of the Vedas, scriptures, serving holy places, austerities or sacrifices? *Bṛhad-nāradīya Purāṇa*

dharmo bhavaty adharmo pi kṛto bhaktais tavācyuta
pāpaṁ bhavati dharmo pi tavābhaktaiḥ kṛto hare

Adharma becomes *dharma* when performed by your devotees, O Acyuta. Dharma becomes sin when performed by non-devotees*. Skanda Purāṇa, Revā-khaṇḍa*

This is also clear in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* in the section glorifying devotees.

Text 29.25

duḥśīlo durbhago vṛddho jaḍo rogy adhano 'pi vā
patiḥ strībhir na hātavyo lokepsubhir apātakī

Women who desire a good destination in the next life should never abandon a husband who has not fallen from dharma, even if he is obnoxious, unfortunate, old, inactive, sickly or poor.

COMMENTARY: "O expert at giving others instructions! We have given up our husbands completely. What is the question of serving them?" But you should not give up a husband even if he has bad conduct, such as being a thief, even if he has bad luck, being unsuccessful in his endeavors (*durbhagaḥ*), even if he is old, incapable of doing actions (*jaḍaḥ*), afflicted with a grave disease, or cannot even maintain himself. The word *api* indicates that each of these items is not a cause of rejection of the husband. The men of Vraja are endowed with all good qualities. How can they be rejected?

The list of qualities is in order of increasing *adharma*. Misfortune (*durbhagaḥ*) is more *adharmic* than weakness (*duḥśīlaḥ*). Misfortune is unavoidable since it is caused by higher powers. Worse than that is old age. Old age is caused by lack of power. An old man is not desirable to a young

woman and cannot fulfill his duties as a householder. If a man is dumb, he cannot distinguish *dharma* from *adharma*. A sick person is never respected by anyone. He becomes the source of all faults because he cannot perform his pious acts. Worse than that is the poor man. He becomes devoid of all good qualities because of lack of money and hunger.

Women who are chaste, who think of this world and the next (*lokepsubhiḥ*) should not reject such husbands even if they are inferior. Otherwise they have defamation in this life and hell in the next. But she can reject a greatly sinful man. Thus the *apātakī* (without sin) should not be rejected. *Smṛti* says *patiṁ tv apatitaṁ bhajet*: the woman should serve the husband who is not fallen. (SB 7.11.28) Since none in the list are fallen, they should not be rejected.

Sometimes, their love for him may diminish on hearing about dharma afterwards. To prevent that, he makes their love stronger by having them first hear about dharma.

Or as previously, he is joking. He enumerates the bad qualities of the husbands, in contrast to his endowment of six qualities such as good behavior.

The meaning using puns is as follows. I am the *pati,* one who protects you from dangers. Desiring good in this and next life, or desiring good for husbands and sons, you should not reject me, though I have all bad qualities. But I have not fallen from dharma (*apātakī*). Rather you should associate with me at all times, with embraces. But I am not fallen, having opposite qualities—being endowed with good qualities and being devoted solely to you. Why should you, surrendered to me disregarding all others, not be embraced right now?

Or though a husband has all six bad qualities, he is not detestable. I however am also a *pati*, but endowed with six good qualities. How can I be detestable? It is suitable that you have come, giving up everything.

A husband endowed with all good qualities and who is not fallen should not be rejected by women desiring material prosperity, but should be rejected by women who desire the highest spiritual benefit. Because you are attracted to me with the highest *anurāga*, you have surpassed respect for good in this life and the next. That is the conclusion.

Or showing hatred for the cowherds, he speaks. The husband who is not fallen but has bad qualities—anger (*duḥśīla*), ugliness (*durbhagaḥ*), old age (*vṛddaḥ*), foolishness (*jaḍaḥ*), sickness (*rogī*), without cows (*adhanaḥ*) is not to be approached (*hātavyaḥ*) by the women of Vraja, who desire my planet (*lokepsubhiḥ*).

Text 29.26

asvargyam ayaśasyaṁ ca phalgu kṛcchraṁ bhayāvaham
jugupsitaṁ ca sarvatra hy aupapatyaṁ kula-striyaḥ

For a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned. They bar her from heaven, ruin her reputation and bring her difficulty and fear.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"O prince of Vraja! We have not given up our husbands just on your order. They have always been husbands in name only. We should treat you as our husband." Fearing this statement, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse. By criticizing their long-cherished desire for him and disguising their actions as most abominable, he speaks with hatred. Such actions are unfavorable for attaining Svarga. O desirous women! Since Svarga is not presently visible, you may not consider it. But you must consider fame in this lifetime. Your conduct will destroy that fame. All previously earned reputation will be destroyed. "Who can possibly think about such esoteric things?" But this will make you useless and insecure (*phalgu).* "But you can make us secure with you!" That can be achieved only with great suffering (*kṛcchram*). "O independent lion! It can be easily achieved by you since you wander at will in Vraja and Vṛndāvana." By illicit affairs you will obtain fear, sometimes from your husbands and others, and fear concerning afterlife. "O Kṛṣṇa with lips worshipped by nectar personified! Depending on you, we will be indifferent to everything. Why do we have to fear anything?" Such conduct and aspiration will for certain (*hi*) be criticized in your homes and other places also. "O supreme knower of truth! By attaining our desire, criticism is easily tolerable." You are all born into good families. Since this will tarnish the family, it is most improper for women of good families. Such

acts must be completely avoided. Actually however, he speaks in this way to increase their longing.

Another meaning is as in the previous verse. The man attained according to one's love is called the husband and the opposite is called illicit *(upapati*). Seeing that society takes the opposite meaning, he quotes *smṛti* scriptures as a joke endowed with a clever meaning: *aupapatyam* in this verse means "being near the husband." Being near the husband destroys chances of attaining Svarga:
serving such a husband is the complete opposite (*para*) of dharma.

Text 29.27

śravaṇād darśanād dhyānān mayi bhāvo 'nukīrtanāt
na tathā sannikarṣeṇa pratiyāta tato gṛhān

Love for me arises by the devotional processes of hearing about me, seeing my deity form, meditating on me and faithfully chanting my glories. The same result is not achieved by mere physical proximity. So please go back to your homes.

COMMENTARY: "O Kṛṣṇa, attained only by *prema*! *Sva-dharma* is just an external *aṅga* of *prema*." Hearing and other processes should be undertaken at home. Or "O supreme person! Everything depends on your mercy. Family does not matter." My mercy is achieved by *prema* for me. That is accomplished by hearing and other devotional processes, not by physical association.

Or "O friend who can bestow all objects! Attaining *prema* for you, no one can criticize us, since we have then achieved the highest human goal." You should then undertake the process to attain *prema*. Taking a scriptural stance, he speaks logically, without affection, with intolerable indifference. One can attain perfection by all or any of the processes mentioned. That is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta, Uttara-khaṇḍa.*

One should hear topics of the Lord, see the deity form, meditate on me, and constantly chant my names.

evaṁ-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ

hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ

Regulated with such devotion, chanting the name of his dear Kṛṣṇa, he develops *prema.* His heart melts and he laughs loudly, weeps, wails and sings. He dances like a madman without regard for the public. (SB 11.2.40)

With the development of *prema*, one can then associate with the Lord. "Seeing the Lord depends on being close to him." To reject that claim, seeing the Lord is placed in a secondary position, with *kīrtana* and other actions being more important than seeing the Lord by direct meeting. The list is in order of increasing excellence, ending in *kīrtana*, which is best. First is hearing, since without that a person is in ignorance. It is said *śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca*: one should hear and chant. (SB 1.2.14) Thus hearing is first. Then, with a desire to see the Lord one sees the deity form. Then one meditates on that form easily. Then *kīrtana* spontaneously arises.

Because of these processes, love for me arises. It does not arise by physical proximity to me.

Sannikarṣo hi martyānāṁ anādaraṇa-kāraṇam: for humans direct contact is a cause of disrespect. (SB 10.84.31)

Since this type of love is against scriptures, or because the mind is fearful, the same result does not come. The love develops to a small extent. Or the love does not develop in the same way, but with great effort, since one overrides local rules and ignores all others. Therefore, give up coming close and perform hearing, etc. Go home, where you can comfortable perform the practices without fear or restrictions. Actually all of this is said in jest or to see the intensity of *prema* of these girls with simple, soft natures, full of constant love.

The meaning using puns is as follows. You should always have love for me without restrictions, and not produce *prema* by hearing, etc., since perfection is achieved by direct association alone, not by hearing and chanting. Love does not develop by hearing to the extent that it develops by physical association. Because of this, come to us or worship us, who have not taken wives (*agṛhān*).

In order to bring them under control by exhibiting great qualities, he does not mention about himself, and uses the plural (*agṛhān*). That is his skill. Or

go to other places without houses such as the bank of the Yamunā. Or enter to my groves (*gṛhān*). You should always stay in these bowers, since they are houses of pastimes or they are my houses.

By the kindling of ten verses, the *gopīs' prema*, soft by nature, expanded eagerly into a towering fire, developing all expectations.

The reversed order of the verses should be examined. Verse 27 about hearing, causing great pain, is the lower direction (below), like the flaming fire. The tip of the flame, the direction above, is verse 26, causing great fever to the head because of criticizing their aspirations. The other eight previous verses starting with verse 25 and ending with verse 18 are in the eight directions starting with the east.

Or there were eleven groups, starting with those giving up milking. Eleven groups came. Among them the ten verses are directed to the different groups starting with the last in the list (those with disarrayed clothing) and proceeding the first in the list (milking cows).

Thus seeing the disarray of ornaments and clothing in one group he addresses them in verse 18 by saying "Is everything well in Vraja?" The first part of the verse is to everyone. Verse 26 is also directed to all of them since it concerns them all. Verse 27 is directed to all of them, since it is an instruction on how to develop *prema*. Verse 19 (this night is quite frightening, and frightening creatures are lurking about) is directed to the women applying ointment to their eye since they appeared rather fierce with ointment on one eye. Verse 20 (mothers and fathers are searching for you) is directed to those who were cleaning their bodies. With concern for their bodies, they had attachment to bodily relationships. Verse 21 (now you have seen this Vṛndāvana forest, full of flowers and resplendent with the light of the full moon) refers to the women applying cosmetics since their interest in perfumes is related to the flowers in the forest. Verse 22 (go back to the cowherd village) refers to the women eating their meals with two words *tad yāta*. Verse 22 (serve your husbands) refers to serving husbands. A command is given, as it is a daily duty. Verse 22 (give milk to the crying babies and calves) refers to feeding children in verse 6. They should go quickly since the children are crying. All the household duties are dependent on serving the husbands. That is the original cause of other

duties. This will be explained in detail later. Verse 22 (milk the cows) refers to milking in verse 5.

To strengthen service to husbands, he speaks to all of them in verses 23-25. To prevent giving up husbands out of love of Kṛṣṇa, he talks about their love for him in verse 23, in the manner of removing a thorn with a thorn. One puts milk on the fire, cooks it and then serves it. This is comparable to serving friends, children and husbands, with serving husbands as the main duty. They are not mentioned separately as services, but are included in the order to serve the husbands, since they are accepted as one. Or he talks in this way as a joke.

Being one in mind, they answer as one person. The one answer applies to all of them. All of Kṛṣṇa's words are also directed in general to all of them. That was mentioned previously.

Text 29.28

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti vipriyam ākarṇya gopyo govinda-bhāṣitam
viṣaṇṇā bhagna-saṅkalpāś cintām āpur duratyayām

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing these unpleasant words spoken by Govinda, the gopīs became morose. Their great hopes were frustrated and they began to think deeply.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They heard the clear words of Govinda, who, as the king of Gokula, should give benefit to all the people Gokula, what to speak of the *gopīs.* Those words seemed to express indifference to the *gopīs* because they had eager natures and the words with two meanings created uncertainty in their aspirations. They experienced pain within (*viṣaṇṇāḥ*) since their long-cherished desire to meet with him was now thwarted. They began to think deeply about how to attain their beloved. Though Kṛṣṇa by nature is soft with *prema*, by our bad fortune he has become most callous. Now maybe we should pacify him by touching his feet. Maybe we should reply to him or maybe we should just be patient for a while. Or maybe we should pretend to go home. Can we understand his deep intentions? Or maybe we

should immediately give up our lives in front of him or out of his sight, by entering the Yamunā. In this way they thought.

Text 29.29

kṛtvā mukhāny ava śucaḥ śvasanena śuṣyad
bimbādharāṇi caraṇena bhuvaḥ likhantyaḥ
asrair upātta-masibhiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāni
tasthur mṛjantya uru-duḥkha-bharāḥ sma tūṣṇīm

Their heads hanging down and their heavy, sorrowful breathing drying up their reddened lips, the gopīs scratched the ground with their toes. Tears flowed from their eyes, carrying their kajjala and washing away the vermilion smeared on their breasts. Thus they stood, silently bearing the burden of their unhappiness.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They remained silent for a moment, deeply thinking without speaking. Their red lips dried up with hot, long breathing. The present participle suggests that the drying was continuous. Their lips which were red and soft like the *bimba* fruit became withered. They drew pictures on the earth with the big toes of their left feet. This is an indication of deep thought. "O earth! Split open, and we will enter within." At this time they remained upright. They washed the *kuṅkuma* from their breast with streams of tears mixed with collyrium. This indicates profuse tears. The cause of all of this was their great burden of disappointment. Though not stated, this also includes pain and exhaustion. Also, their complexion changed and they became stunned. The word *sma* means that it was not impossible that they lament in this way because of his joking words. Or *sma* indicates astonishment that, by his words, they became grief stricken. See the greatness of their *prema.* Their deep contemplation did not contradict the fact that they expressed refusal in their answers which follow, since this was possible when well-bred women make requests with great desire and since their very nature was to manifest feelings which did not contradict the *rasa.*

Text 29.30

preṣṭhaṁ priyetaram iva pratibhāṣamāṇaṁ
kṛṣṇaṁ tad-artha-vinivartita-sarva-kāmāḥ
netre vimṛjya ruditopahate sma kiñcit
saṁrambha-gadgada-giro 'bruvatānuraktāḥ

Although Kṛṣṇa was their beloved, and although they had abandoned all other objects of desire for his sake, he had been speaking to them unfavorably. Stopping their crying, they wiped their eyes and began to speak, their voices stammering with anger, because of their great attachment to him.

COMMENTARY: "Kṛṣṇa, who was dear to them, had spoken as if he was not affectionate. Why did they not withdraw their minds from him?" They had given up all other desires completely in order to attain Kṛṣṇa. Thus, they could not withdraw their minds from Kṛṣṇa—the form of condensed bliss, attractive to all minds.

"How was it possible for these *gopīs,* afflicted so greatly, to speak?" They gave up weeping out of great grief, wiped their eyes carefully, removing the tears. With great effort they composed themselves. Or in great suffering, *anurāga* is a cause of the power to speak. This is a quality in *prema*. They wiped their eyes to induce his affection, or as a symptom of great *prema* or to speak while looking at his face. In great distress, they lost all shyness. They had only slight anger, since he was their beloved or because their love was soft. Or they spoke with choked voices out of great, indescribable anger because of their great attachment.

Or they spoke in an abbreviated manner. "Why?" Because tears choked their voices, from anger born of love. "Why?" Because of their attachment. Previously of course, they were attracted by their nature. Now greater attachment arose with great eagerness by hearing his words. Or having special attraction, they were not depressed though he acted indifferently. Or because of their *anurāga*, he was still attractive, even with the words he spoke. Thus they spoke to him, because he was their lover (*preṣṭham*).

Previously he had seemingly spoken harsh words. Or taking it as the present tense, he continued to say "Give up worrying, do not cry, be comfortable and return home." Those were seemingly harsh words, for actually he was joking. That was explained previously.

I offer respects to the *gopīs* who are the masters of cleverness, who understood the meaning of his words and by whose mercy I have understood the meaning.

Text 29.31

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ
maivaṁ vibho ’rhati bhavān gadituṁ nṛśaṁsaṁ
santyajya sarva-viṣayāṁs tava pāda-mūlam
bhaktā bhajasva duravagraha mā tyajāsmān
devo yathādi-puruṣo bhajate mumukṣūn

The gopīs said: O all-powerful one, you should not speak in this cruel way. Do not reject us, who have renounced all material enjoyment to render devotional service to your lotus feet. Reciprocate with us, O stubborn one, just as the primeval Lord, Nārāyaṇa, reciprocates with his devotees in their endeavors for liberation.

COMMENTARY: Since Kṛṣṇa began to speak to the *gopīs* with the same words that he spoke to the wives of *brāhmaṇas*, the *gopīs* reply with words similar to the words of the wives. (*svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgāḥ priyaṁ kiṁ karavāṇi vaḥ* SB 10.23.29, SB 10.29.18) Actually they spoke to get relief from the pain caused by his cheating words. You should not speak such words that you spoke to them. They speak with great pain. “Why?” The words are cruel, breaking the heart, being hard as diamonds. Or the words directly bring about death. *Nṛśaṁsa* means violent or fatal. You should not clearly say (*gaditum*) such words, or if you say them, you should not put them into action. You are soft with *prema*. Let others speak such words.

Using the word *bhavān* (you) indicates their respect for him, in order to indicate their initial conciliatory mood. *Bhavān* also means the moon, which is lord of the constellations (*bha*). Since you increase love like the moon, you should not speak such words. O lord of our life, or person spreading everywhere inside and outside (*vibho*)! You know our love. Therefore you should not speak such words.

Though you spoke respectfully, reasonably and softly, the meaning of the words was the opposite, since those words obstructed *prema-rasa* and were spoken to convince us to return home.

This verse answers Kṛṣṇa's first words in verse 18. "O good speakers! What can I do?" Please fulfill our desires (*bhajasva*) or enjoy with love. "Why?" Because we have begun to worship (*tad bhaktāḥ*) the soles of your feet, or the dust of your feet, or your shoes. They do not mention lotus feet, since they convey that he is hard because of his harsh words.

Or we have begun to worship your feet which are the shelter of all things. Even today the worship is not fully accomplished. They say this with humility and politeness, with a desire to be his servants. Or we have taken shelter of your feet. If you do not fulfill our desires, your words would be meaningless. *Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*: I respond according to the devotee's surrender. (BG 4.11) This is their response to his question "What can I do for you?" (SB 10.29.18)

"O wives of cowherds! Why should I respond to you, who are difficult to associate with, since I am detached and not married? Why should I respond to you who are not detached?" We have completely given up all objects of the senses achieved by husbands, etc., and will not accept them again since everything is obtained by attaining your lotus feet, which are the root of everything. Or we gave up everything since it was unfavorable for worshipping you. By giving up sense objects, giving up husbands is understood, since husbands are the root of sense enjoyment.

Or "O worshippable ladies who know the truth! Why do you desire happiness from material objects?" We have given up sense objects. We desire the highest spiritual happiness. Playing with you is the essence of unlimited human goals, since it is the manifestation of mature *prema*. You must also respond to us by giving up everything, as we did, to make your words *tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham* true. This is a response to his words "Is everything well in Vraja?" (verse 18) What is the use of asking if everything is well, when you act indifferently, though we have given up everything?

"O fickle women! I fear *adharma*." They say with anger, "O crest jewel of whimsy (*duravagraha*)! Or Kṛṣṇa, difficult to attain! Do not reject us, who have surrendered to you. Being so hard to attain, you will be sinful if you reject those who have surrendered to you. You will break your vow of keeping your promise. Since you are the Supreme Lord, you should not be

touched by sin. Breaking promises is not proper. Or do not give us up completely (*ātyaja*) out of stubbornness."

"O talkative women! Being full of desire, you are not suitable for me." Great persons accept those who worship them while giving up everything. They give an example. As the Lord (*deva*) you must fulfill the desires of you devotees, especially if you are the greatest person (*ādi-puruṣaḥ*). You respond to those who desire liberation, so you must respond much more to those who desire you alone. Or the great person responds to the devotees (*amumukṣān*). Just as he accepts, you should accept us. Or *yathā* can stand for *yathāvat* (suitably). The meaning of the example is the same. Just as the great man accepts all who worship in some way, so you should accept us.

Or "O chaste women! I should not act in such a way." The object of worship (*deva*), even if he is the Supreme Lord, accepts those desiring liberation. By giving them liberation, he fulfills their desires. Thus there is no fault in fulfilling the desires of devotees.

Being omniscient, Kṛṣṇa knew that the *gopīs* who desired him were special devotees having knowledge of his great powers which assist in creating variety in *mahā-bhāva*. He had them engaged in skillful use of words to make his mind favorable, in order to announce their greatness, though the descriptions of his powers are unsuitable for his final goal. The *gopīs* thought, "He will think that we are ignorant of the Lord's real nature if we do not mention his greatness."

This description of his greatness occurs when they are in great distress, not when they were in bliss. Knowledge of his greatness diminishes their happiness in relation to him. They never change the sweetness of their love. Similarly, there is the following statement:

na khalu gopīkā-nandano bhavān
akhila-dehinām antarātma-dṛk
vikhanasārthito viśva-guptaye
sakha udeyivān sātvatāṁ kule

You are not actually the son of the *gopī* Yaśodā, O friend, but rather the indwelling witness in the hearts of all embodied souls. Because Brahmā

prayed for you to come and protect the universe, you have now appeared in the Sātvata dynasty. (SB 10.31.4)

O pervader inside and outside (*vibho*)! You know our love. Therefore respond to us who have taken shelter at your feet. Otherwise, your promise to respond in BG 4.11 will be meaningless.

Or they speak in anger arising from their love. O person who does not respond to the devotees (*bhaktā abhaja*)! O person inaccessible (*duravagraha*) to the devotees (*sva*)! We gave up all the enjoyable things. Or we gave up all material enjoyment and even Vaikuṇṭha.

Please accept persons who never desire to give up (*amumukṣūn*) the soles of your feet, since you are worshipped by the universe (*devaḥ*). If you do not accept us, you cannot be worshipped as a *deva.* You must accept us since you are the Supreme Lord (*ādi-puruṣaḥ*), in a complete manner (*yathā*). Otherwise your nature as Bhagavān is not accomplished. Generally, they speak in order to convince him to accept them, by showing logic. Do not give us up, since we are yours.

Sarasvatī, their friend, keeping a second meaning in the painful words of the *gopīs*, sings their greatness to the devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Let us also speak similar harsh words: Do not say words like “Please tell me” since we have given up enjoyment. To start enjoying again would be a fault for us, who have surrendered to you. Give up your stubbornness (*duravagraham ātyaja*). Just as the Lord responds to persons desiring liberation, you should respond to us. Give us the highest goal, not material happiness. That is our welcome, or good fortune, the well-being of Vraja.

Or you should respond without restraint to those who worship your feet, giving up all enjoyment. Do not give us up completely (*ā tyaja*). Those who are great respond to the devotees but not to the nondevotees. Then the example of the Lord is given.

Text 29.32

yat paty-apatya-suhṛdām anuvṛttir aṅga
strīṇāṁ sva-dharma iti dharma-vidā tvayoktam
astv evam etad upadeśa-pade tvayīśe
preṣṭho bhavāṁs tanu-bhṛtāṁ kila bandhur ātmā

Our dear Kṛṣṇa, as an expert in dharma you have advised us that sva-dharma for women is to faithfully serve their husbands, children and other relatives. We agree that this principle is valid, but actually this service should be rendered to you who give instructions. After all, O Lord, you are the dearest friend of all embodied souls. You are their most intimate friend and their very self.

COMMENTARY: "O teachers of proper conduct! In giving up things you have to consider *sva-dharma*." They speak with a joking mood. *Aṅga* is an address offered in *prema*. Things should be offered to you, the Supreme Lord, or the master of all people in Vraja! You have been addressed as such by Brahmā and Indra in Vṛndāvana. He is addressed in this way so as to refute his words, not to express their *bhāva*. He always appeared to them as the son of Nanda full of sweetness, eternity, knowledge and bliss. You are the dearest (*preṣṭhaḥ*), dear to all beings, and you are the friend, or benefactor of all beings, because you are Paramātmā. *Kila* indicates certainty. Service to you is the highest dharma. Everything else should be rejected.

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

One should perform one's daily and periodic rites (*nitya-naimittika karmas*) as long as one does not become detached from them or has not awakened his faith in hearing topics about me.. (SB 11.20.9)

Or you who know dharma have said that women who are attached (*raṅga-strīṇām*) should serve their husbands. This does not apply to us who are attached only to you. Everything else should be ignored by people like us. They show the reason. Speaking of how he is dearest, they request with logic.

You are dearest to all beings, what to speak of us, because you are the benefactor and *ātmā*. You are naturally dear. Or you give consciousness to everything. You are the helper, internally and externally. Or you make the *jīvas* beautiful with *bhakti* or bind them with chains of *prema* (*bandhura ātmā*). Therefore, let the *sva-dharma* for all beings and us be – dedication to you. This is not stated directly, as it is secret. Let dharma be in you, since your feet are taught to be worshiped while giving up everything, according

to all scriptures or gurus. Considering your lotus feet, *sva-dharma* can be given up.

Or "O women who know the essence! Let your desires become manifest." Then they pray with fervor. In this way (*evam*) may you in person, not as an *avatāra*, act as the *ātmā* of all beings, including us. May you be the dearest and the benefactor of all beings! The words *preṣṭha* and *bandhu* indicate *prīti.* The *prīti* is for you, who are the object (*pada*) of teaching by elders or friends. To avoid being bold, they speak indirectly of associating with him at this point. Women can directly attain perfection but men can attain perfection in *bhāva* only in another birth, like the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya. They speak in general, out of longing in *prema*.

Or you should be the master (*īśe*), the object of teaching for us, because you are beautiful by nature (*bandura ātmā*), the best of all beings.

Or let there be cruelty in you, who are the object of all statements by gurus who indicate your worship, since you are the Supreme Lord or the supreme independent (*īśe*). (You can do as you like.) They speak with malice.

Or let there be cruelty in you, but you are the lord of our lives. You are the very *ātmā* or body of all us embodied women. You are the dear friend, the dearest to us all.

Because we have bodies, the *ātmā* is our friend. But you are not dear to us (*apreṣṭhaḥ*), are you (*kila*)? Are you thinking that we cannot give up our bodies? We are as if free of our bodies already. Now, for you, we will give up our bodies. This their response to verse 19. They do not fear animals since they are not concerned with their bodies and there is no goal in returning to Vraja since he is the object of worship.

There are three meanings without considering his powers. They joke. Let this be in you (*tvayī etad astu*): you become a woman and perform service for your husband, since you are guru (*upadeśa-pade*). If the guru does not perform an action, the students will not be inclined to do the action. You are also capable of doing this (*iśe*), since you are the best (*preṣṭḥaḥ*) by your nature. No one will have affection for you if you are a poor imitation of a woman.

The meaning using puns is this. It is the *sva-dharma* of women to serve the husband, sons and friends. Friends should be served and you are a friend

(verse 24). So your desires can be fulfilled. (*astu evaṁ etat īśe = astu eva me tat īśe*). Let the love be for you, my husband (*me īśe*) since you are the subject of all scriptural instructions about husbands. "O chaste women! Let that be. The husband should be served. But since I am accepted as a friend, the object of love by all the people of Vraja, without worry experience happiness by seeing the forest in the autumn moonlight in beautiful Vṛndāvana." Though you are dearest to all beings related to Vraja, you have a mischievous nature (*bandhura ātmā*). Because of that, we do not trust you.

Or serving husbands is really (*su*) *adharma* for women. You who know dharma have said this. Let that statement be yours, since you are the instructor, and are capable of doing or saying anything (*īśe*). People will not slander you, who have given these instructions. No one will slander you since you are supreme among all beings.

Text 29.33

kurvanti hi tvayi ratiṁ kuśalāḥ sva ātman
nitya-priye pati-sutādibhir ārti-daiḥ kim
tan naḥ prasīda parameśvara mā sma chindyā
āśāṁ dhṛtāṁ tvayi cirād aravinda-netra

Expert transcendentalists always direct their affection toward you because they recognize you as their true self and eternal beloved. What use do we have for these husbands, children and relatives of ours, who simply give us trouble? Therefore, O supreme controller grant us your mercy. O lotus-eyed one, please do not cut down our long-cherished hope to have your association.

COMMENTARY: "O moon in the ocean of desire! Not only do we say this with desire, but persons with discrimination and good conduct say this." Crying, they speak pitifully. The wise have *prema* (*ratim*), not just faith, only (*hi*) for you and no one else, since you are the friend of the self, the giver of consciousness (*sva ātman*) and the internal and external benefactor (*nitya-priye*) and give happiness.

Or O *ātmā*! O eternal one! This indicates that husbands and others are not eternal. The wise have *prema* for you, who are dear (*priye*) by nature and

beneficial to the self (*sve*). This is the opposite of husbands. What is the use of husbands and others? They are of no use at all. The use of husbands is accomplished because of you. The husbands also give pain since they are subject to rebirth and cause grief because of their temporary nature. This includes mothers, fathers and brothers. Or they cannot destroy (*daiḥ*) suffering. Even if they destroy suffering sometimes or a little, what use are they? Those who are skillful have love for you, the object of *prema* at all times (*nitya-priye*). What is the use of husbands who give suffering to the self (*sva ātman*)?

Therefore, since all should have *prema* for you (since others give suffering and persons of good conduct are devoted to you), be merciful to us devotees. "Women are generally fond of ornaments. Accept some ornaments from me as mercy." Since you are the Supreme Lord you can give extraordinary mercy.

They elaborate on this. Do not destroy that strong hope, as long as we live (*cirāt*) or until we realize it, rather fulfill that hope. If you destroy that hope, our lives will also be destroyed. Their aspiration is strong because he is the most beautiful (*aravinda-netra*).

śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat-
sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dṛśā
surata-nātha te 'śulka-dāsikā
vara-da nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ

O Lord of love, in beauty your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of benedictions, you are killing the maidservants who have given themselves to you freely, without any price. Will you not kill us? (SB 10.31.2)

Or you can take away our pain by your glance. It is not proper to keep us in a miserable position.

One version has *varadeśvara* instead of *parameśvara. Varada* refers back to Kṛṣṇa giving a benediction on stealing the *gopīs'* clothing. Also *varada* can mean "O destroyer of blessings you have given already!" You can do that because you are the Supreme Lord, independent in action (*īśvara*). They speak with anger. Though you gave blessings to the young girls

performing austerities, that should apply to other girls also, since their friends are the same as they are.

Or O great lover! Innocent girls should not worship you. Why should we worship you? Those who are clever show love for you. What use do we, who are clever, have for husbands? Moreover, you have given us a boon. Therefore be merciful to us.

This verse is a response to verse 20. (Not finding you at home, your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are certainly searching for you. Don't cause anxiety for your family members.) They should be disregarded since they give pain.

Or they pray with determination to give up their bodies, as was previously explained. O boy whose mind is on his possession of cows (*sva ātman*). This indicates that he is not skillful. Should we who are skillful, having husbands who destroy suffering, have love for you, who do not show affection for anyone (*apriye*)? No, we should not. Do not be merciful to us. Destroy our hopes. *Aravinda* means having spokes, a wheel. You have eyes that pierce, that are most expert at killing us. They utter this in anger with a desire to die.

Or you have eyes that do not open at night, like the lotus. Thus it is natural that you ignore us beautiful women. It is also proper that we give regard to mothers, etc., as you explained. They say this when they manifest some hatred.

Should chaste women with auspicious forms have love for you since they have husbands who will inflict pain on those who are dear, ourselves (*nitya-priye sva ātmani*)? No. Therefore, O giver of blessing! O Lord! Be merciful to us. We will not remain (*sma*) here for long. Please give permission so we can return home. But (*tu*), O lotus eyed Kṛṣṇa (*ayi aravinda-netra)!* Cut your strong hopes for associating with us. Or do not obstruct the path to Vraja (*āśām*). "You should look and find the path yourselves." The path has been blocked by you (*dhṛtam*). ;

Text 29.34

cittaṁ sukhena bhavatāpahṛtaṁ gṛheṣu
yan nirviśaty uta karāv api gṛhya-kṛtye

pādau padaṁ na calatas tava pāda-mūlād
yāmaḥ kathaṁ vrajam atho karavāma kiṁ vā

Until today our minds were absorbed in household affairs, but you easily stole both our minds and our hands away from our housework. Now our feet won't move one step from your lotus feet. How can we go back to Vraja? What would we do there?

COMMENTARY: You stole our mind with happiness. This implies that household duties were full of misery. Or you stole our hearts along with our happiness. The feet engaged in household chores were stolen.

Our feet will not move one foot from your feet. The power to use the senses has been stolen.

"You speak lies. Why did you come here?" We were attracted by your flute. We did not come by our own power. Because of this we cannot go back on our own. Our feet will not move one foot.

Thus, how will we go to Vraja? "O women! Shall I send you?" What will we do there? *Vā* indicates reference to all that was said, or questioning some alternative. Or it indicates something unspoken. We will search, but where will we go? You stole our hearts and we cannot work, or even if we can move, there is no purpose in working. Though, if the heart is stolen, all the senses are stolen, hands and feet are still mentioned to indicate that they can no longer serve their husband and cannot return home.

Or previously our hearts were happily engaged in our household chores. Then you stole our hearts. Now it does not enter into those chores. Why were they required anymore? "O queens of the house! Can you not do the work, but without attachment?" Our hands have been stolen. They have no interest in engaging in that work. "Then why not go home and just stay there." Our feet have been stolen by you and cannot move.

Our hearts are absorbed in you. Our hands will work for serving you. Our feet will enter your place but will not go elsewhere. Or though our hearts have been destroyed (*hṛtam*) by the pain (*tāpa*) of *saṁsāra* (*bhava*), our hands easily engaged in household chores. Why send us to serve our husbands? "O speakers of truth! You should go there." Our feet will not move. We should not stay because you are harsh, but we cannot go either. What shall we do?

This verse is an answer to verse 21. Since our hearts are stolen, there is no use trying to pick flowers or look at the forest. Even if we want to see the forest, since we cannot wander about because our feet are stolen, we cannot see much of the forest. What is the use of seeing the forest?

There is a joke using puns. Since we have no goal in the forest, we did not come here to see the forest. Since you stole the wealth of our hearts, we came here for that purpose. But coming to the thief, we cannot grab you and take you somewhere to yell at you, since you have stolen our hands and feet. With our treasure stolen, how can we go to Vraja? What can we do? We are powerless, with no method to counteract the best of thieves, who has a special mantra which stuns us.

Na should be applied to the verbs. If you did not happily steal our hearts, then our hearts would be absorbed in household chores. If our hands and feet were not stolen, they would be engaged in household chores. Our feet go to Vraja (*padam*). How can we go elsewhere? Why should we do what you say? In this meaning, going to the bank of the Yamunā is rejected.

Or our hearts were happily preoccupied (*sukhena bhavatā*) in the house because they were absorbed in the chores. Though our hands were absorbed in the chores, our feet do not move to Vraja from your feet which deviate from dharma (*calataḥ*), but we will go.

Text 29.35

siñcāṅga nas tvad-adharāmṛta-pūrakeṇa
hāsāvaloka-kala-gīta-ja-hṛc-chayāgnim
no ced vayaṁ virahajāgny-upayukta-dehā
dhyānena yāma padayoḥ padavīṁ sakhe te

Dear Kṛṣṇa, please pour the nectar of your lips upon the fire within our hearts—a fire you ignited with your smiling glances and the sweet song of your flute. If you do not, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation from you, O friend, and thus like yogīs attain to the abode of your lotus feet by meditation.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *gopīs* situated in a second direction express their hopes clearly, revealing their longing and showing clearly the necessity of that longing being fulfilled, while concluding that he will be at fault by his present refusal. They begin with an order "Please extinguish the fire in our hearts" because of their intense anguish. *Naḥ* is related to *hṛt-chayāgnim* and *tava* is related to *hāsāvaloka*. Even though the word is not necessary for understanding, they express the idea "The fire is caused by you and it should be extinguished by you." The word *pūrakeṇa* (fullness) indicates the intensity of the fire. The suffix *ka* of *pūraka* indicates "full in itself." The soft sound of the flute and the smiling glance are like adding ghee and wind to the fire. *Hṛcchaya* means lust, "that which resides in the heart." Some special herb must enter the heart to extinguish the blaze: drinking the fullness of streams of nectar. There is no other method. This is a direct request for enjoyment but is not contrary to *rasa,* for these *gopīs*' hearts were maddened by the sweetness of his body and the song of his flute and were submerged in intense longing, agitated with the pain of deep, extraordinary *anurāga.* Because their statement is covered by indifference, they make their request even stronger by negation. If you do not extinguish this fire, by meditation we will now attain your feet since it is said, "What one thinks of at death one attains." The imperative mood is used to express immediacy. They express affection for each other by calling out "O friend!" According to the order of the words, their intentions are clear.

"I have a water pot for sprinkling on the fire caused by my smiling glances." Fearing such a mocking answer, they speak. The fire should be extinguished using nectar, not water, and fully (*pūrakeṇa*), not just a little nectar. "But nectar is rare. Where will I obtain it? And you are demanding abundant nectar. That is impossible." Why are you hiding it? It is on your lips. No other nectar will extinguish the fire, only the nectar of your lips. Since the fire has increased, there must be abundant nectar, which will not satisfy the millions of youthful *gopīs*. By this their great thirst is indicated. The extraordinary nature of this nectar will be described later. "You say you will attain me by meditation. I do not see any preparation for this quick death." Our bodies will burn in the fire of separation. Are we devoid of attraction like others, so that we will have to search for material fire? This fire will arise spontaneously from within us.

Or, after summarizing their intentions he says, “Why are you in such a hurry to carry out such a difficult task?” Out of great sorrow they confirm that it is difficult. By meditation we will not attain you since our bodies are meant for the fire of separation and are not suitable for meeting you or attaining the nectar. Since our desires cannot be fulfilled in this life, even in our next life we will experience separation. “O friend!” This indicates that Kṛṣṇa will also suffer in the future because of this.

Or, they indicate that quickly they should give up their bodies since they cannot attain him. May we attain the tips of his feet in a future birth! They cry out, feeling intense friendship. This verse is a response to Kṛṣṇa’s words in verse 19. Though we give up these bodies endowed with good qualities out of aspiration for you, we cannot give up you. The two verses indicate Kṛṣṇa’s powers in the same way.

The expression of indifference is as follows. O great playboy! Extinguish the fire arising in your heart caused by our smiling glances and soft songs, by means of the full nectar of your lips. There is not one among us who can extinguish your desire by the nectar of their lips. By this, they express indifference of all others in their own group as well. When a most sweet desired object is unobtainable, greedy people lick their own lips. This is a joke. Though you obstruct our path insistently, we will make our bodies suitable for dying because of the fire of separation from our husbands. Therefore we will not attain your feet though we meditate. O friend, you know that we are fixed in dharma since you played with us when we were children.

Or *cet* can mean “certainly” as in the phrase *dhatte padaṁ tvam avitā yadi vighna-mūrdhni.* (SB 11.4.10) Certainly we will not burn in the fire of separation and will not attain your feet by meditation.

Text 29.36

yarhy ambujākṣa tava pāda-talaṁ ramāyā
datta-kṣaṇaṁ kvacid araṇya-jana-priyasya
asprākṣma tat-prabhṛti nānya-samakṣam añjaḥ
sthātuṁs tvayābhiramitā bata pārayāmaḥ

O lotus-eyed one, the goddess of fortune considers it a festive occasion whenever she touches the soles of your lotus feet. You are very dear to the residents of the forest, and therefore when we first touched those lotus feet, from that time on we have been unable even to stand in the presence of others, for we will have been fully satisfied by you.

COMMENTARY: "O women with great desire! You also have devotion to Baladeva. Go to him. Why should I accept you, who belong to others?" O most beautiful Kṛṣṇa (*ambujākṣa*)! We touched the underside of your feet, or your feet which are like the surface of the earth. This is an expression of humility in *prema*. Those feet have given joy to even Lakṣmī. You have affection for the people of the forest, ourselves, though we have no qualification for enjoying with you. This means he is most merciful. If we stand in front of others at some time, then that is done indirectly, not directly facing them (*na anya-samakṣam sthātum*). If we have to stand directly in front of them, we become overwhelmed with grief. We cannot stand in front of them, what to speak of sitting or lying down. You have caused this. We have been made completely joyful by you (*abhiramitāḥ*). *Bata* indicates lamentation or certainty.

Or though your feet should be served by Lakṣmī, they give joy to the forest people, because you have affection for them. At some time or at some indescribable place (*kvacit*), we touched those feet, and also obtained joy. From that time, we have been satisfied with you or have had special enjoyment with you, during sleep, etc. (*abhiramitāḥ*).

Or O great bewitcher! We should go to the house and wait there, hoping for your association. That cannot happen because you have plundered the happiness of the house. They then speak this verse. There are two causes of touching his feet. The opportunity was given to Lakṣmī for enjoyment by he who is affectionate to the forest people. Having been made happy by you, we also touched those feet. They do not have the fault of lack of discrimination. Nothing else gives joy. Why should we go home?

Or those feet have given joy to Rādhā (*ramāyāḥ*). If she came here, all the others would speak to generate his affection for her and also themselves.

This verse answers verse 23. We have come here because of special *prema*, not like others with ordinary *prema*. O person of the forest! Or O person

whose followers are from the forest, since you wander in the forest. We have touched the feet of the dear husband (*priyasya*), which give an opportunity for enjoyment. But (*tu*) being satisfied with good fortune (*ayā*), we cannot remain in front of others truthfully.

Text 29.37

śrīr yat padāmbuja-rajaś cakame tulasyā
labdhvāpi vakṣasi padaṁ kila bhṛtya-juṣṭam
yasyāḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa utānya-sura-prayāsas
tadvad vayaṁ ca tava pāda-rajaḥ prapannāḥ

Goddess Lakṣmī, whose glance is sought after by the devatās with great endeavor, has achieved the unique position of always remaining on the chest of her Lord, Nārāyaṇa. Still, she desires the dust of your lotus feet, even though she has to share that dust with Tulasī-devī and with the Lord's many other servants. Similarly, we have approached the dust of your lotus feet for shelter.

COMMENTARY: "O crest jewel of generosity! Do not sprinkle the fire in our hearts with the nectar from your lips. Just give us service to you." I can accept a few of you foolish women only. Because you are many, there will be constant competition and ultimately suffering. With a desire for service, in great distress, they reject this objection using an example.

Other than you, the *devatās* and Brahmā desire the glance of Lakṣmī. Envy will arise because of

their special greatness. This indicates intolerance at the competition among cowives. That is indicated by the word *anya* (other). And the Lord is not attached to her. Yet she along with her cowives desires the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. The wives of Kāliya say:

kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe
tavāṅghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ
yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā

O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kāliya has attained this great opportunity of being touched by the dust of your lotus feet. For this end,

the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows. (SB 10.16.36)

yaṁ vai vibhūtir upayāty anuvelam anyair
arthārthibhiḥ sva-śirasā dhṛta-pāda-reṇuḥ
dhanyārpitāṅghri-tulasī-nava-dāma-dhāmno
lokaṁ madhuvrata-pater iva kāma-yānā

Lakṣmī, whose foot dust people desiring wealth hold on their heads, also serves you on various occasions with a desire for attaining the powerful position of the king of bees perched on the *tulasī* garland offered by the devotees to your feet. (SB 3.16.20)

The reason she desires the dust is that it is served by servants. The dust is considered most attractive because it is served by a host of servants, who have become the object of the Lord's great affection. Or though Lakṣmī has attained a position on Viṣṇu's chest, she certainly (*kila*) desires the dust of your feet because of its unparalleled attractive sweetness. Like Lakṣmī (*tadvat*), we have taken shelter of that dust with surrender. They become servants of that dust. The foot dust indicates their desire for a low position, out of the highest *bhakti*. They do not request direct service. To express the rarity of the attainment, they use the singular, meaning a little dust.

Or by being servants, they will attain the dust. Or by attaining the dust, they will attain servitude.

The desire for the dust also indicates their surrender. The use of *yat* and *tat* indicate that like Lakṣmī, they are fixed in one desire. Or since Lakṣmī desired the dust of his feet to get relief from pain, so we also will get relief, but if we do not get his foot dust, we will suffer.

Or Lakṣmī directly desired the foot dust because of her great qualities, but we are low, without qualification, and surrender to a particle of dust which has fallen far away somewhere (*padam*). This expresses extreme humility. The phrase "dust from his feet" is repeated to express their desire for service alone. Lakṣmī does not consider the fault of competition because of her desire for service. We are also like this.

Or in order to request service later, they explain the excellence of the desire of Lakṣmī who is worshipped by all. Or unlimited servants serve the dust because they are related to Tulasī who is dear to Kṛṣṇa's feet. The

place is crowded. *Sāraṅgāṇāṁ padāmbujam*: at his feet are many devotees. (SB 1.11.26) The demons and *devatās* desire that dust.

This verse answers verse 24. Service to husbands is not the highest dharma. Serving you is the highest. Brahmā and even Lakṣmī pray for that.

Or Lakṣmī desires the dust of Viṣṇu's feet. Similarly we desire your foot dust.

tasmān nandātmajo 'yaṁ te nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ
śriyā kīrtyānubhāvena gopāyasva samāhitaḥ

In conclusion, therefore, O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa by his qualities, opulence, fame and influence. You should protect this child very carefully. (SB 10.8.19)

This meaning is without showing Kṛṣṇa's powers. Another meaning using puns is as follows. Though Lakṣmī was highly qualified, and had attained such a place, she only desired the foot dust of Kṛṣṇa, but could not attain it. This indicates her lack of discrimination. Some fault is indicated by the fact that many desire her glance. She should desire Kṛṣṇa's foot dust without having her own position.

Or Lakṣmī whom the *devatās* struggle to see but cannot—being intoxicated when she is there and fainting when she departs—desires my foot dust. She resides on Kṛṣṇa's chest as a golden line and is known in this form in Vraja by the words of Garga and others. She should be served by the *gopīs*. Thus they say that they should surrender like her. But still, being intelligent and sober, we will return home to serve our husbands.

Text 29.38

tan naḥ prasīda vṛjinārdana te 'nghri-mūlaṁ
prāptā visṛjya vasatīs tvad-upāsanāśāḥ
tvat-sundara-smita-nirīkṣaṇa-tīvra-kāma
taptātmanāṁ puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa dehi dāsyam

Therefore, O vanquisher of all distress, please show us mercy. To approach your lotus feet we abandoned our families and homes, and we have no desire other than to serve you. Our hearts are burning with

intense desires generated by your beautiful smiling glances. O jewel among men, please make us your maidservants.

COMMENTARY: Since we have surrendered to your foot dust, please be merciful. They address him. “Please make us your servants.” “O women mad with new youth! Why should I give servitude which is requested by Lakṣmī?” They speak with humility. With a desire to worship you, giving up our houses with friends and retinue, we have attained your feet. You must fulfill the desires of those who have surrendered, giving up everything. Otherwise we will be overwhelmed with grief. You should not make this happen. O deliverer from suffering! You must give us service imbued with special *rasa*, O king of *rasa*! Our hearts are burning with intense desires generated by your beautiful smiling glances. You must do this. O ornament among men!

Or “O married women! Go to your houses and worship me along with my servants, the cowherd men. At home, there are unlimited articles that can be employed in worship.” They reply pitifully. We have given up our houses because it destroys (*nāśa*) worship of you (*upāsa*). Our houses are not favorable for worshipping you. Most attractive one! We do not pray for servitude like other devotees. That can be accomplished in the house with the cowherds. We want special service. They speak with great pain. O you who pain (*uṣa*) the hearts (*bhu*) of the *jīvas* (*puruṣa*)! You do this by your beautiful smiles and glances. O you with beautiful smile and glances (*sundara-smita-nirīkṣaṇa*)! Speaking with deceit, they indicate their hidden *bhāva* by the skill of words. Our souls are pained with sharp desire because of you (*tvat*). Quickly give a remedy for this, otherwise we will die. Or give us servitude as the remedy.

Or, “O women of Vraja! You automatically have service to me by being daughters or wives of the cowherds who are my best devotees. Why do you have to pray for this?” That is true. But give us special service. Out of modesty and shyness they do not directly indicate themselves. They speak in agitation. Give service which is suitable for those in pain.

Or with grass in their mouths they speak in great pain. Give us service to some women who are pained in their hearts. By service to them, we will definitely get your special mercy.

This verse is a response to verse 25. “Women who desire a good destination in the next life should never abandon a husband who has not fallen from dharma, even if he is obnoxious, unfortunate, old, inactive, sickly or poor.”

With a desire to worship you, it is proper to give up even a good husband. That conclusion has been written. In desiring to worship you, particularly the houses, being related to husbands, become sinful because they obstruct your worship. They should thus be given up. So what is the fault or consideration if persons pained by love for you give up the house? What can persons devoured by a big snake do?

Another meaning using puns is explained. You are the destroyer of sin (*janārdana*) for other people. We have attained your feet. Even now you are concerned about sin. Be merciful. Forgive our offense of coming here. Take the mind and fix it in piety.

Or “Service to me is difficult to attain even by Lakṣmī. Please accept whatever I give by mercy.” With malice they speak. Giving up our houses with a desire to worship you, we have come to your feet. Give service to those who are pained by sharp desires. Genitive case expresses the dative. What is the use of chastity to husbands? O person who decorates men or friends and not women! Or O person who pains the hearts of the *jīvas*! What use do we have for you? What is the use of *bhakti* to you?

Text 29.39

vīkṣyālakāvṛta-mukhaṁ tava kuṇḍala-śrī
gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudhaṁ hasitāvalokam
dattābhayaṁ ca bhuja-daṇḍa-yugaṁ vilokya
vakṣaḥ śriyaika-ramaṇaṁ ca bhavāma dāsyaḥ

Seeing your face encircled by curling locks of hair, your cheeks beautified by earrings, your lips full of nectar, and your smiling glance, and also seeing your two imposing arms, which take away our fear, and your chest, which is the only source of pleasure for the goddess of fortune, we must become your maidservants.

COMMENTARY: “O tasters of service! Please accept service like that of Śrīdāmā and Subala, who are such servants.” Emotionally, they pray for a

special type of servitude. They look closely (*vīkṣya*) at his beauty. They describe his face, arms and chest to suggest kissing his cheeks and drinking nectar from his lips as well as embracing him. His locks are on the upper portions of his face, the earrings are on the sides and his smile is on the lower portion of his face. This indicates the beauty of all of his face. His cheeks are like flat areas (*sthala*), more beautiful than mirrors. His two arms destroy fear for the devotees by killing demons, since the arms are strong, and they remove the fear of husbands. They actually indicate that they want to be deeply embraced by the arms. The arms are called sticks because they are round, thick and long. His chest has the highest beauty (*ramaṇam*) because of Lakṣmī or its own beauty. The two words *ca* indicate the special beauty of these items. The word *vīkṣya* and *vilokya* with the meaning "seeing" indicate the prominent position of the face, arms and chest. Or they show the *gopīs'* great confusion by indicating that just by seeing him they desire to be his servants. Let us become servants by directly experiencing the special *rasa* of being your servant. The present imperative is used.

The deep meaning is this. The highest happiness in worship for married women is to have an illicit lover. That is well known from *Bhāgavatamṛta* and *Kāvyālaṅkāra.* Thus the *gopīs* pray for a special type of servitude. Let us be servants. Or your face makes the earrings beautiful. The nectar of the lips is situated on your cheeks which have the beauty of the earrings. We see your smiles and your glances. These are the main items indicated by the repetition of *ca.*

Your chest is most beautiful (*vilokya*) or is to be seen in a special way by the world. It is even attractive to men. Kapila says:

vakṣo 'dhivāsam ṛṣabhasya mahā-vibhūteḥ
puṁsāṁ mano-nayana-nirvṛtim ādadhānam

One should meditate on the Lord's chest, the special residence of Mahā-lakṣmī, which bestows pleasure to the minds and eyes of men. (SB 3.28.26)

One should mediate on the chest of Kṛṣṇa which is pleasurable for the eyes of men, what to speak of women. He does not mention women directly because Kapila is speaking to his mother. The chest is the only playground (*ramaṇam*) of Lakṣmī since she dwells there. *Ca* indicates only. Or the chest

gives happiness since it always embraces her. Or the chest is the best playground of beauty. The omission of the *visarga* in *śriya* is poetic license.

The first *ca* means “and” and the second means “though.” The face and arms are secondary. The chest has exceptional beauty and happiness. But because of envy in competition with Lakṣmī, it becomes secondary. Or the two *cas* indicate that all are equally important. They are each cause of their being servants.

Or the previous prayer for being a servant is actually a prayer for illicit love. “How can you request this, O lusty women? Why do you not desire that all of you can be my wives by marriage, like the young girls who performed Kātyāyanī vows?” They speak with coyness. Looking at your face, arms and chest, we desire to enjoy you as our illicit lover (*dāsyaḥ bhavāma*). The imperative form indicates a desire. By an appearance of intense *prema rasa,* they experience *madhura-rasa.* This is described in *Bhāgavatamṛta* and *Kāvyālaṅkāra.*

This is a reply to verse 26. (For a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned. They bar her from heaven, ruin her reputation and bring her difficulty and fear.)

By seeing your face, illicit love arises. What fault do we have? But one attains happiness by this illicit love which is greater than happiness from liberation, Vaikuṇṭha and Lakṣmī’s worship. What is the use of heaven and reputation? You should respond to us cultured women.

The meaning using puns is as follows. Even if we look at your beautiful face, arms and chest, should we engage ourselves in your service (*dāsyaḥ*)? Imperative cases represent a possibility. No. We should not. Your chest, arms and face are the playground for unsteady persons, not for us women who have firm vows of chastity.

Or when you show your face with locks and earrings, and show your two arms, and show your chest, we become fearful (*dattā bhayam*). To make ourselves fearless, have a face devoid of passion (*bhava amada āsyaḥ*).

Text 29.40

kā stry aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām

trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran

Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn't deviate from proper path when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of your flute? Your beauty makes all three worlds auspicious. Even the cows, birds, trees and deer manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on end when they see your beautiful form.

COMMENTARY: "O women of best conduct! You should preserve good conduct to teach persons like me." They speak in misery. What woman in the three worlds would not deviate from the proper path by the sound of your flute? All would deviate. That is well known from Pārvatī hearing about his attractiveness in *Skanda Purāṇa*.

kṛṣṇaṁ nirīkṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlaṁ
śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītam
devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā
bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyaḥ

When the *devatās'* wives flying in airplanes with their husbands catch sight of Kṛṣṇa, whose nature and form bring joy to all women, and when they hear the pure song when he plays the flute, their hearts are shaken by Cupid, and they become so bewildered that the flowers fall out of their hair and their belts loosen. (SB 10.21.12)

The flute should not be played at all. But the all attractive form is always present. This form is dear to all (*saubhāgya*) or most beautiful for the upper, middle and lower worlds. The word *idam* indicates that the form is directly visible and negates other forms. Or *idam* indicates a most extraordinary form.

Seeing Rāma's beauty, the sages were bewildered and developed special *bhāva*.

purā maharṣayaḥ sarve dandakāraṇya-vāsinaḥ
dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra bhoktum icchan suvigraham
te sarve strītvam āpannāḥ samudbhūtāś ca gokule

Previously all the great sages at Daṇḍakāraṇya saw Rāma and desired to enjoy that beautiful form there. They became women and were born in

Gokula. (*Padma Purāṇa*)

agni-putrā mahātmānas tapasā strītvam āpire
bhartāraṁ ca jagad yoniṁ vāsudevam ajaṁ vibhum

The saintly sons of Agni attained bodies of women by the path of *vaidhi-bhakti,* and attained as their husband (not lover), the unborn, powerful Vāsudeva, source of the universe. (*Mahā-kūrma Purāṇa*)

Now the form surpasses that form in beauty, because it does not display the powers of the Lord. Or this form (*idam*) is indescribable, most astonishing. Even by seeing your picture, a special *bhāva* manifests. Uddhava says:

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his *yoga-māyā.* That form astonishes even the lord of Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. (SB 3.2.12)

The three worlds are bewildered by the song of your flute, just by hearing and remembering it. If they directly see you, they cannot move at all. Because of that form (*yat*), the cows, bulls, buffaloes, etc., all the domesticated animals, though without intelligence, horripilate all over their bodies (*pulakāni*) at all times because of special *bhāva*. This infers other ecstatic symptoms also.

gā gopakair anu-vanaṁ nayator udāra
veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyaḥ
aspandanaṁ gati-matāṁ pulakas taruṇāṁ
niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram

My dear friends! When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass from forest to the forest with their cowherd friends, with their cows, carrying ropes to bind the cows' rear legs at the time of milking, by the generous sound of his flute, among all living beings, those things which move become inert and trees

which cannot move sprout shoots in ecstasy. This is most amazing. (SB 10.21.19)

The form is most enchanting, just by hearing the flute. Rukmiṇī says:

śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatāṁ te
nirviśya karṇa-vivarair harato ’ṅga-tāpam
rūpaṁ dṛśāṁ dṛśimatām akhilārtha-lābhaṁ
tvayy acyutāviśati cittam apatrapaṁ me

O beauty of the worlds, having heard of your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of your beauty, which fulfills all the desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon you, O Kṛṣṇa. (SB 10.52.37)

Thus the form is most excellent. Those who have eyes can appreciate the beauty. They become astonished on seeing how all people become totally confused on seeing clever Kṛṣṇa. Even the cows and other animals without the power of discrimination develop ecstatic symptoms.

Even the *devatās* develop symptoms of ecstasy:

savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ
śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ
kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ

Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other chief *devatās* listen repeatedly to the sound. Although they are the most learned authorities, with hearts in submission, they cannot ascertain the meaning and forget everything. (SB 10.35.15)

Or *yad* can mean “by the flute sound and the form” animals’ hairs stand on end. The special enchanting power of the flute was described in the Twenty-first Chapter. It will also be described in the Thirty-sixth Chapter.

The enchanting nature of Kṛṣṇa’s form and flute song have been described. This includes the enchanting nature of his name. Because his name is most enchanting, they cannot even utter it directly. Thus there is no fault at all in giving up proper conduct if it is beyond one’s power to resist. Actually such devotees are not required to follow proper conduct. They are beyond it. That was previously described.

Thus Śrīdhara Svāmī writes that it is proper to give up one's dharma simply on hearing a sound indicating Kṛṣṇa. It is possible for the Lord to follow proper conduct to teach the people since he is full of all powers. But how is it possible for devotees controlled by *prema* who have no such power? Their greatness is very deep.

nirapekṣaṁ muniṁ śāntaṁ nirvairaṁ sama-darśanam
anuvrajāmy ahaṁ nityaṁ pūyeyety aṅghri-reṇubhiḥ

I always follow the footsteps of my pure devotees, who are free from all personal desires, are rapt in the thoughts of my pastimes, are fixed in me, without any feelings of enmity, and are equal to all conditions of the world. Let me be purified by the dust from their feet! (SB 11.14.16)

This verse answers verse 27. "Love for me arises by the devotional processes of hearing about me, seeing my form, meditating on me and faithfully chanting my glories. The same result is not achieved by mere physical proximity. So please go back to your homes."

Since men, sages in a previous *avatāra*, and even cows now become bewildered, what can we do? We are not at fault for losing discrimination.

Or the cows develop such bliss just by seeing him or hearing his flute. On directly enjoying him the highest bliss in special *prema* will develop. So close contact is recommended. By hearing, *bhāva* develops and, by direct contact, the *bhāva* becomes special.

The meaning using puns is as follows. What women would fall from proper behavior? None would fall. Does not the beautiful form which causes cows to horripilate exist in the three worlds? Yes, it does. Do not be proud of that.

Or O person playing a song on the flute! O bewildered one! O person bewildered by desire! This is exclaimed with a lack of control. Who would not move away from you? Who would not go home? Why? Because they have proper conduct, the highest dharma.

Or O best person bewildered by the sound of the flute! This is said with great boldness. Because of your bad character, who would not go away? Who would accept you?

Text 29.41

vyaktaṁ bhavān vraja-bhayārti-haro ’bhijāto
devo yathādi-puruṣaḥ sura-loka-goptā
tan no nidhehi kara-paṅkajam ārta-bandho
tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkarīṇām

Clearly you have taken birth in this world to relieve the fear and distress of the people of Vraja, just as the primeval Lord protects the domain of the devatās. Therefore, O friend of the distressed, kindly place your lotus hand on your maidservants' heads and burning breasts.

COMMENTARY: After refuting each of his statements in order, now they show the goal of his *avatāra*, and make a prayer with great pain and misery. You have appeared to free the people of Vraja from fear, such as the forest fire, and from the pain of not attaining you. You appeared to remove Vraja's fear that you would be harmed by Pūtanā, the forest fire, etc., and their pain when you were attacked by the whirlwind. Or you appear in order to remove the fear of separation from you, and the pain of separation. One version says that he comes to remove unlimited internal and external pains of the people of Vraja.

Or you remove the pain and fear of all beings in Vraja. Then you must remove our fear and pain also. You have appeared (*jātaḥ*) with a special manifestation of unlimited qualities (*abhi*). Though you come to remove the burden of the earth, mainly you come for removing the fear and pain of the people of Vraja in order to accomplish your *prema-rasa.* Though the Lord appears when there is a violation of dharma, he comes particularly because of compassion for the suffering.

The Lord is worthy of worship by the world (*devaḥ*) since he is the cause of the world (*ādi-puruṣaḥ*), the Supreme Lord. He similarly protects the people of Svarga. Or he protects the *devatās* and his own devotees (*loka*) by killing their enemies. Just as the Lord appears or exists and protects them, and shows favors to the devotees though he is equal to all, so you should relieve us of pain, even if this trespasses dharma. As the Lord has no fault in doing so, you also have no fault in doing this.

Or though you are worshippable, though you are the Supreme Lord, and though you protect the *devatās*, you also deliver the people of Vraja from

pain and fear and have thus appeared as the son of Nanda. That is very clear (*vyaktam*).

Your hand is like a lotus because it is cool, relieves pain, and flows with blissful *rasa*. Place your lotus hand on our breasts, burning with desire. Later, place it on our heads, to destroy the pain, to make us fearless or to show your acceptance of us as your servants. The two words *ca* indicate that both breasts and heads are equally important. By relieving pain and fear from us *gopīs*, who are fully dedicated to you, the pain and fear of all people of Vraja will be removed. Your goal as *avatāra*, to manifest unlimited qualities of Bhagavān, will be fulfilled.

"Why should I place my hand on your burning breasts? I will get burned." O friend of persons in pain! You can tolerate your pain since you are affectionate to those who suffer. "I am afraid of placing my hand on the heads of chaste women who have taken vows." It is not proper to allow your servants (*kiṅkarīṇām*) to suffer when you are personally present.

Or "O women intoxicated with desire! Since I have controlled desire, how can I place my hand on your breasts? I will place it only on your heads." Do not place your hand there out of desire, but because you are the friend of the distressed. If you do not do this, we will die and you could not be famous as the friend of the distressed.

The deep meaning is this. Though our desires are concealed, by placing your hand on our limbs they will manifest. "I am shy in front of so many of you." You should not be shy, since we are all one in being your obedient servants. This request by many groups of *gopīs* to one person can be fulfilled since he can manifest his special *śakti.* Or one after the other, he can place his hand on their breasts and heads.

The meaning using puns is as follows. You have been born as the son of Nanda. Since you are *deva, ādi-puruṣa* and protector of the *devatās*, you should not engage in *adharma*. Just as the Lord protects the *devatās,* removing their fear, you remove the fear and pain of the people of Vraja. But by forcibly conquering us chaste women you give fear and pain to the people of Vraja. This is not proper for you, since it contradicts your purpose. O friend of the distressed! We are not in pain. You will be our friend in the future. Our breasts are not in pain (*atapteṣu*). Do not place

your hand there. Or Kṛṣṇa, with a heart burning with lust! Or though you are burning, do not place your hand on our breasts. As prince of Vraja, do not place your hand on our heads, making us servants, since we live in Vraja. Or do not even place your hands on the heads of maid servants (*kiṅkarīṇām*) living in Nanda's house, what to speak of our heads.

After answering him with ten verses and defeating him, in the eleventh verse they make clear their desire with intense pain. They also reject his opposite meanings with their opposite meanings using puns. Those have been explained.

Or with a special skill they answer all ten of his verses in each of their verses. But they have one extra verse, and their verses are in a longer meter. This is for the purpose of producing their victory. Or it indicates their deep sorrow, covered by anger in love.

Taking their first verse (verse 31) as an example, addressing him with *vibho* to indicate *prabho* and *bhavān* indicates their servant attitude. Therefore you should not speak indifferently to us (verse 18). In giving up everything they state their intention at that moment. What is the use of your words? We have dedicated ourselves to your feet (*bhaktā tava pāda-mūlam* verse 31). This answers verses 19 and 20. Having taken shelter of you, we have no fear of wild animals or relatives. The word *bhaktā* also replies to verse 21. We have come to worship you, not to see the flowers of the forest. This also replies to the second part of verse 18 (please tell me why you have come). We have come to worship you. It also replies to verse 22 (go and serve your husbands). Please respond to us (*bhajasva*). This indicates their special *bhāva*. This answers verse 23 (perhaps you came out of great love for me.) Yes, for that reason we have come, and not out of affection seen in ordinary people. You are difficult to attain (*duravagraha*). This answers verses 24-25, rejecting service to husband and others stated with logic. Do not reject us (*mā tyaja*). This answers verse 26-27. Though stated with logic, their sense of rejection becomes evident, because their prayer is full of misery. They also show logic by citing the example of the Lord protecting the *devatās* (*devo yathā*). The details can be understood according to what was previously written.

Their answer in verse 32, with the mention of duties to husbands, replies to verses 20, 22, 24 and 25. They reject service to relatives and husbands by saying that service should be dedicated to him. Do not cause worry to relatives (verse 20). This is answered with "Let service be offered to you, the Lord (*tvayi īśe*)." It also answers his statement "Is everything well in Vraja?" By his influence, everything there is auspicious. It answers his description of the wild animals in the forest. Near you, there is no fear. "Please, say why you have come?" (verse 18) We have come to serve you. "Welcome to the forest." (verse 18). This is an inappropriate address to persons who are controlled by you. The word *evam* suggests their special *bhāva*, referring to verse 23 (perhaps you have come here out of your great love). *Upadeśa-pade* (you who give instructions—verse 32) answers verse 26. Everyone should worship you in all circumstances. By a reflection of your worship, all faults are destroyed and all good qualities are achieved. You are the best (*preṣṭhaḥ*). This indicates that he is not an illicit lover. This answers verse 27 which forbids close association with him. Since you are the supreme soul, association with you is also supreme and spiritual. Otherwise there would be no relationship between light and darkness. Also being seen with him, the forest also becomes the best (verse 21). It is not seen separately from him. What is the use of just seeing the forest? Absorbed in defeating him, with anger born of increasing *prema*, in denying his statements there is no particular order of their answers. That applies to all verses.

Verse 33 begins by rejecting verse 18. Cruel words are not suitable to the skillful or wise who have made you the object of *rati.* Or for persons who are most skillful, for those who have approached you, your welcoming words should be taken as they are. Husbands give pain (verse 33). This answers his question "How is everything in Vraja?" (Verse 18) This verse also answers verse 20-23. (Mothers, fathers, sons and brothers search for you. You have seen the flowers. You must serve your husbands.) They have *rati* for you, their *ātmā*. (verse 33) This answers verse 19 about wild animals. What is to be feared, when you are the lord of our lives? One should stay at the side of one's greatest friend. *Varadeśvara* (instead of *parameśvara*) answers verse 23 (Perhaps you have come here out of your great love for me.) Since you give benedictions, we have come for special

prema. This answers verse 21 (coming to see the flowers). Please be merciful (*prasīda*). This answers verse 26 (for a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned.) By your mercy all good qualities manifest and all faults disappear. Do not break our hopes. This answers verse 27. (The same result is not achieved by mere physical proximity. So please go back to your homes.) They had longed for his direct association for a long time.

With happiness, you stole our minds. (Verse 34) This answers verse 18. You should not say cruel words since you are a form full of happiness. You stole our hearts. This answers verse 18 (How is Vraja?) and verse 19-20. (The forest is dark and has frightening animals.) Since he stole their hearts, they are not concerned with these things. What can I do to please you? Please say. (Verse 18) Since our hearts are stolen, do what is necessary to please us. That is our reason for coming.

What should we do? This answers verse 22 (Go back to the village) and verse 24 (Duty is to serve the husband). We cannot move from here. Our hearts are stolen. This confirms his statement in verse 23. We have come because our hearts have been stolen by you. This is unlike other persons who have affection alone. This also answers verses 26 and 27. We have no fault in losing our discrimination since you are most attractive. What should we do? Other actions are detestable. Being close to you is excellent.

Verse 35 (Sprinkle us with the nectar of your lips) answers verse 18 (Welcome. Your coming is most fortunate.) You should do what is most beneficial for us. Tell me what is pleasing to you. This also answers verse 23 (Did you come out of great love). For this reason alone we came. If you do not, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation from you. Since everyone will die, there will be no need to worry about adharma.

Verse 36 also answers verses 18 and 21. Harsh words are unsuitable for you who take away all pain (by your lotus eyes). Or if you glance with your sweet eyes, then we would have been welcomed and become fortunate (verse 18). Or by seeing you who are most attractive (lotus-eyed), we are welcomed and made most fortunate. Since you are affectionate to the forest people, we will have no fear of forest animals who are dear to you, since we are by your side. We should stay there. We did not come to see

the flowers. How is Vraja? We have touched your feet and are fully satisfied. Now we have no taste for relatives, etc. (verses 20, 22, 23, 24) We are satisfied with you. We have come here because of special *bhāva* to enjoy with you. This answers verse 23. This is what will please us (verse 18 - how can I please you?). We have touched your feet. Verses 26 and 27 express sin from illicit affairs. We should worship you as our illicit lover since we cannot be your wife like Lakṣmī. But how can there be infamy from attaining the person attained by Lakṣmī?

Just as you associate with her, you should associate with us. This will produce *bhāva* continuously. Otherwise you could not have association with Lakṣmī who is worshipped by all devotees and possesses the highest *prema*.

Verse 37 responds to verses 18, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 25. Lakṣmī is desired by Brahmā and others but ignores them. She desires your feet. Similarly we can ignore all others and surrender to you. What is the use of other actions? We have come with this great *prema*. This responds to verse 23.

Just as Lakṣmī resides with you on the milk ocean as your beloved, we can reside with you in Vṛndāvana. Thus we do not have to see the forest. (verse 21) How can we be defamed (verse 26, 27)? Lakṣmī is never defamed. Thus it is proper to desire to be your servant. What pleases us is this. Thus we become most fortunate (verse 18). This is a suitable welcome.

Be merciful and make us your servants. (Verse 38) This is what pleases us (verse 18). What pleases us is to obtain your mercy. We have come for this. O deliverer of the suffering! This answers verse 18 (how is Vraja) and verse 19. You destroy all fear and suffering. We want to approach your lotus feet. You say go home (verse 28) but having attained those feet, we cannot go. We must stay. We have given up our homes. This answers verses 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24. We desire to worship you. We have come to serve you, not to look at the forest. We desire to see that face. This answers verse 23. We have come with hearts pained by desire. You are the ornament among men. This answers verses 26 and 27. Since you are supreme, there is no fault in a relationship with you since you are actually our husband, and the supreme goal. Love will increase by our direct association with you. Statements like *sannikarṣo hi martyānām* (10.84.31) are for materialists.

Seeing your face, we should become your servants. (Verse 39) This answers verses 18, 19-22, 24 and 25. If we are your servants, we have no other interest. We have come with the *bhāva* of servants. (verse 23) Your chest is the playground of Lakṣmī. This answers verses 26 and 27. Service to you is what we want. This answers verse 18 (say what will please you.) We have come for that purpose. If that is accomplished the welcome is proper. Or your arms give fearlessness. This answers verse 18 (is Vraja well), verses 19-20, and verses 24-26. He can destroy all fear of animals, relatives and rules. Since relatives are all useless, there is no fault in giving them all up. We have come to see your face not to see the forest. By seeing your face, we have no desire to see anything else. Your chest is the playground of beauty. This answers verse 27.

For those bewildered by your flute (verse 40), what is the use of welcoming words, etc., expressed in verses 18-25? What is the use of asking what pleases us and what is the use of enlightening us about dharma? Your beauty is auspicious for the three worlds. This answers verses 26-27. Why consider this improper? The *bhāva* keeps increasing. Your attraction is astonishing, even the animals develop ecstasy. Thus there is no fault in approaching you because of attraction. You have appeared to destroy the fear and suffering of Vraja. This answers verse 18 (is Vraja well), verse 19-20, verse 22, and verses 24-25. Fear is not possible because of you. You are the Lord (*devaḥ*). This answers verses 26-27. You have no fault in associating with us, since you are affectionate to the miserable. Thus we should have no fault from that association with the *ādi-puruṣa.* All faults in material association involving material illicit relationships are denied since as the Lord, he is the husband. This should actually be the goal.

Place your hand on our breasts. This answers verse 18 (please tell me what you want). We are servants (*kiṅkarīṇām*). This answers verse 23. We have come for a special service. For servants seeing the forest is a secondary goal. Seeing Kṛṣṇa is the main goal. Please bestow what we have long requested. Then your words of welcome will be meaningful. What more can be said? The work will become too long.

The meaning of each part can be different according to one's taste, for persons enjoying the mercy of the lotus feet of the Lord who is affectionate to the *gopīs*. The words that the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa exchanged and their

meanings have been explained recklessly, with unintelligence, understood from the heart, for the pleasure of the devotees.

It is understood that before this time they did not have direct association with Kṛṣṇa, otherwise both parties would not have spoken in this way. Thus the author of *Muktaphala* accepts *pūrva-rāga* in the following verse.

akṣaṇvatāṁ phalam idaṁ na paraṁ vidāmaḥ
sakhyaḥ paśūn anaviveśayator vayasyaiḥ
vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor anu veṇu juṣṭaṁ
yair vā nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam

The cowherd girls said: O friends! We do not know any other success for those with eyes than the face of the younger one who plays the flute—the face experienced as he casts a side glance of love, the face tasted by people with eyes—as the two sons of Nanda take the cows from forest to forest along with their friends. (SB 10.21.7)

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains this also. In commenting on verse 36 of this chapter, Vallabha-bhaṭṭa explains that in dreams they had become blissful with Kṛṣṇa (*abhiramita*). The same can be explained for the following verses.

gopīnāṁ paramānanda āsīd govinda-darśane
kṣaṇaṁ yuga-śatam iva yāsāṁ yena vinābhavat

The young *gopīs* took the greatest pleasure in seeing Govinda, since for them even a moment without his association seemed like a hundred ages. (SB 10.19.16)

taṁ gorajaś-churita-kuntala-baddha-barha-
vanya-prasūna-rucirekṣaṇa-cāru-hāsam
veṇum kvaṇantam anugair upagīta-kīrtiṁ
gopyo didṛkṣita-dṛśo ’bhyagaman sametāḥ

Kṛṣṇa’s hair, covered with the dust raised by the cows, was decorated with a peacock feather and forest flowers. He glanced charmingly and smiled beautifully, playing upon his flute while his companions chanted his glories. The young *gopīs*, all together, came forward to meet him, their eyes very eager to see him. (SB 10.15.42)

Or one can explain that they associated with Kṛṣṇa directly one or two times out of his sense of great pleasure. That being the case that would be the chief meaning of *abhiramitāḥ.* Now together they enjoyed many times or with special actions in the *rāsa* dance.

yadyapy asau pārśva-gato raho-gatas
tathāpi tasyāṅghri-yugaṁ navaṁ navam
pade pade kā virameta tat-padāc
calāpi yac chrīr na jahāti karhicit

Though Kṛṣṇa's feet were next to them and in private, those feet appeared more and more beautiful at every moment. Which woman could give up those feet which Lakṣmī never gives up? (SB 1.11.34)

Or according to the above verse, they enjoyed many times but they thought of him as ever new, since that is the nature of the sweetest object. Thus he spoke these verses as the crest jewel of tasters of *rasa* as if it were the first time. And thus Śrīdhara Svāmī's comment is also correct. This is explained in *Bhāgavatamṛta, Uttara-khaṇḍa.*

Text 29.42

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti viklavitaṁ tāsāṁ śrutvā yogeśvareśvaraḥ
prahasya sa-dayaṁ gopīr ātmārāmo 'py arīramat

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Smiling upon hearing these despondent words from the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic yoga, mercifully enjoyed with them, although he is self-satisfied.

COMMENTARY: Hearing their despondent words, which had double meanings because of being tinged with both agreement and disagreement, he smiled brightly with mercy. The following example was not his smile, for they had clearly explained their desires.

hāso janonmāda-karī ca māyā

His smile is *māyā* which deludes all men. (SB 2.1.31)

Or being merciful he enjoyed with them while wiping away their tears with his hand. He could not have been indifferent, with a false smile. He had great affection for them because they were *gopīs*, qualified for his mercy,

having special *prema*. He smiled at their sad words which they uttered because they did not know his intentions and because he had hidden meanings in his words.

Or he smiled with pure intentions because he was overjoyed at their answers or because, by his words, they stopped hiding their feelings and developed strong symptoms of love. *Hāsa* is a *vyabhicārī-bhāva* of *śṛṅgāra-rasa.*

"*Rati* is produced by mutual attachment, and manifests with playful gestures. He should not show the qualities of an *ātmārāma*." Though he was the master of those who perfected concentration of the mind (*yoga*), though he was *ātmārāma,* now he was not situated in that *yoga* since he displayed various playful gestures.

Or, by their sad words, his lordship over those who control the mind disappeared and by the enjoyment, his nature of *ātmārāma* disappeared. Otherwise he could not have enjoyed hearing their words.

Or being the master of masters of yoga, he did not have one form but many, and simultaneously enjoyed.

Text 29.43

tābhiḥ sametābhir udāra-ceṣṭitaḥ
priyekṣaṇotphulla-mukhībhir acyutaḥ
udāra-hāsa-dvija-kunda-dīdhatir
vyarocataiṇāṅka ivoḍubhir vṛtaḥ

Surrounded by the assembled gopīs whose faces blossomed by his glance, Kṛṣṇa, who responded to each of them without fail, whose activities were most attractive, whose smile revealed his shining rows of teeth, white like jasmine buds, increased in beauty, like the moon surrounded by stars.

COMMENTARY: Four verses (43-46) describe how he enjoyed. Showing how he is the promoter of the enjoyment, the verse describes his special beauty in relation to them when love arises, using an example.

They gathered together, coming very close to him. Or they met him, after giving up their anger. Or the *gopīs* had met with Rādhā (*samā*), she who is

endowed with the greatest beauty (*mā*). This means that in the beginning when the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa spoke, Rādhā was not present. When Kṛṣṇa ceased to hide his intentions, she appeared.

He was surrounded by them and was unconquered by desire (*acyutaḥ*). Or he is never without all beauty. Or he is never without *rasa*. He is always full of unlimited *rasa*. He shone in a special way (*vyarocyata*). The cause of gathering is given. He had the most attractive activities, touching, offering flowers, glancing, etc., filled with various playful gestures which stimulated special *rasa*.

Or he smiled because of the elements described in this verse. Or smiling, he enjoyed. *Rati* means enjoying. The reason for the meeting was this enjoyment. His activities were elements of this enjoyment and the cause of his shining brightly. Their faces blossomed because of his glances or because they saw him. His power because of special *śakti* is shown, since he could glance at each of them equally as they surrounded him. Their faces were like lotuses and his glance was like the sun, making their faces blossom.

They revealed special *rasa*. His *rasa* is also described. His broad smile and his teeth were like rows of jasmine flowers. His smile was pure and his teeth were white. Or he had teeth like rows of jasmine in his broad smile. Or he had rows of jasmine-like teeth which made his smile excellent. By the beauty of his teeth, the smile became more beautiful.

His special beauty, though supreme and eternal, became more beautiful when combined with the *gopīs*. He shone like the full moon surrounded by shining stars. Their beauty together is most excellent. This implies he is eternally with them.

Text 29.44

upagīyamāna udgāyan vanitā-śata-yūthapaḥ
mālāṁ bibhrad vaijayantīṁ vyacaran maṇḍayan vanam

With the gopīs singing his praises, that leader of hundreds of groups of women sang loudly. He wandered in the forest wearing his Vaijayantī garland, beautifying the Vṛndāvana forest.

COMMENTARY: With the appearance of great beauty, he made Vṛndāvana beautiful. He wandered about in order to go to the Yamunā, suitable for *rati,* in order to stimulate the *gopīs*' love by showing the flowers and by singing. They praised him by describing his form, qualities and pastimes. Or he was praised with songs on all four sides. He sang loudly out of joy. *Vanitāḥ* means women who have developed a great attraction to a man. This is the definition given by *Viśva*. He was the protector (*paḥ*) of hundred of groups of such women. Or he was the relisher of hundreds of groups of women. Or he was the drinker of the nectar from the lips of hundreds of groups of women. They were in groups according to the similarity of qualities.

Some of the *nitya-siddha gopīs* from Goloka appeared with him on earth. Some of the *gopīs* were *devatā* women.

vasudeva-gṛhe sākṣād bhagavān puruṣaḥ paraḥ
janiṣyate tat-priyārthaṁ sambhavantu sura-striyaḥ

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who has full potency, will personally appear as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore all the wives of the *devatās* should also appear in order to satisfy him. (SB 10.1.23)

Others by great effort developing special *bhāva* by *sādhana* became *gopīs*. These are of two types: sages and *śrutis*. The sages are the ones at Daṇḍakāraṇya and performers of austerities at Mānasa lake. *Śrutis* refers to the great Upaniṣads. This is explained in *Padma Purāṇa* and *Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa.* There are differences between the *gopīs* because of special *bhāvas*. Though they are divided into groups, since they have similar *bhāvas*, they all enjoyed equally.

The *vaijayantī* garland is made from flowers of five colors: *pañca-varṇā vaijayantī*. Some say it is made of nine gems. They wore other ornaments as well:

valayānāṁ nūpurāṇāṁ kiṅkiṇīnāṁ ca yoṣitām
sa-priyāṇām abhūc chabdas tumulo rāsa-maṇḍale

A tumultuous sound arose from the armlets, ankle bells and waist bells of the *gopīs* as they sported with their beloved Kṛṣṇa in the circle of the *rāsa* dance. (SB 10.33.5)

However, the garland is mentioned because it was particularly beautiful in the night. Or at that time the *gopīs* quickly made the garland and gave it to him. Kṛṣṇa then wandered in the forest.

Text 29.45

nadyāḥ pulinam āviśya gopībhir hima-vālukam
juṣṭaṁ tat-taralānandi kumudāmoda-vāyunā

Kṛṣṇa went with the gopīs to the bank of the Yamunā, where the sand was cooling and the wind, enlivened by the river's waves, bore the fragrance of lotuses.

COMMENTARY: He brought them to the Yamunā and then enjoyed with them with great cleverness. That is described in two verses (45-46). The river was the Yamunā as is confirmed in SB 10.30.44. The name of the forest and the river are not mentioned since they would be inferred by the present descriptions, as they were well known. Or it is described simply as a river to emphasize the excellence of the bank and, since it flowed through the forest, to emphasis the solitary nature of the place.

He entered the place with the *gopīs*, with great affection (*āviśya*). It had cool sand. It was thus suitable as a bed for love pastimes since it would bring relief from fatigue and would be soft. The bank was served by the wind made blissful by the river's waves and carrying the fragrance of lotuses. Or the bank was served by the wind made fragrant by lotuses made to blossom at night, though they were normally closed at that time, since they became blissful by waves shaking them.

Another version has *kumud.* The bank was made cool by the waves, and fragrant and indolent by the wind. The bank was suitable for love. It was an *uddīpana* for love.

Text 29.46

bāhu-prasāra-parirambha-karālakoru
nīvī-stanālabhana-narma-nakhāgra-pātaiḥ
kṣvelyāvaloka-hasitair vraja-sundarīṇām
uttambhayan rati-patiṁ ramayāṁ cakāra

There Kṛṣṇa threw his arms around the *gopīs* and embraced them tightly. He aroused Cupid in the beautiful young ladies of Vraja by touching their hands, hair, thighs, belts and breasts, by playfully scratching them with his fingernails, and also by joking with them, glancing at them and laughing with them. In this way the Lord enjoyed his pastimes.

COMMENTARY: He manifested (*uttambhayan*) the *gopīs'* love though it was covered, by spreading his arms, etc.

Or though the love was present already in the form of special *prema*, now it increased particularly.

Rati-patim means "one who nourishes *prema*." Though Cupid's body was burned up, to enjoy *prema* at this time, he got a new body (*uttambhayan*). This shows Kṛṣṇa's attraction for *rati* or *prema*, and his extreme cleverness in love. By spreading his arms, he attracted the *gopīs* who were situated far away. Or first he initiated embracing them. Or he spread their arms. Or, by spreading his arms, he then embraced them tightly. *Kṣeveli* (play) indicates making allusions or biting or drinking the nectar of their lips. They were also skillful at love (*vraja-sundarīṇām*). Otherwise his skill in love would not manifest. He enjoyed with each of them by his special *śakti.*

Text 29.47

evaṁ bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇāl labdha-mānā mahātmanaḥ
ātmānaṁ menire strīṇāṁ māninyo hy adhikaṁ bhuvi

The gopīs became proud of themselves for having received such special attention from Kṛṣṇa, the greatest hero and Svayam Bhagavān. Each of them thought herself the best woman on earth.

COMMENTARY: Now begins a description of the special *rasa* of separation, produced in order to have a special play later, with intense *prema*. They had received respect from Kṛṣṇa even though he was *ātmārāma* (*mahātmanaḥ*), by his manifestation of special love skills. Or because of him, they became proud, because he manifested his powers in order to experience special *rasa* (*bhagavataḥ*), since he was an ocean of great, variegated *rasa* (*kṛṣṇāt*), or the supreme attractor of hearts. Each one, being proud (*māninyaḥ*), thought that she was the best among all the

women existing on earth. Or each thought that she was supreme among the *gopīs* in the playground in the forest, though each one enjoyed with him. Thus they became proud.

Or they also became angry (*māninyaḥ),* since in the next verse both pride and anger are mentioned. Actually this is a natural manifestation in *rasa*, a component of service, for the *gopīs* who were most skillful at love, in order to please Kṛṣṇa, who is fond of playful love.

Text 29.48

tāsāṁ tat-saubhaga-madaṁ vīkṣya mānaṁ ca keśavaḥ
praśamāya prasādāya tatraivāntaradhīyata

Keśava, seeing the gopīs too proud of their good fortune, wanted to relieve them of this pride and show them further mercy. Thus he immediately disappeared.

COMMENTARY: He saw their intoxication or pride (*madam*) because of the good fortune of his skillful love, or because of the good fortune of giving him pleasure, or because of the happiness which arose by his loving treatment, or because of the good fortune of his giving them pleasure. That intoxication should be reduced, otherwise his desired *rāsa* dance could not take place, if they had an independent mood.

He saw their anger (*māna*). He was satisfied with their anger, but without its disappearance he could not give special mercy by which the special *prema* in the *rāsa* dance could be accomplished. Or he disappeared to reduce their pride (*mada*) and anger (*māna*) so that he could give special mercy to them with the *rāsa* dance. Or by disappearing, he wanted to announce his dependence on them. (SB 10.32.22)

Or he saw their joy or insanity caused by their good fortune. *Mada* means semen, musk, pride and transformation due to joy according to *Viśva-prakāśa.* He saw the exaltation (*mānam*) in their minds. He then disappeared to create great (*pra*) happiness in the *rāsa* dance (*śamāya*) and to give mercy. In disappearing, mercy was manifested in their intense worship of him, without giving him up. That will be evident later. Or he disappeared to give special happiness which was mercy.

He disappeared out of special affection, not out of indifference as an *ātmārāma* or out of hatred. That was not the behavior of Kṛṣṇa towards those who were most affectionate to him. It will later be explained.

evaṁ mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda
svānām hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye 'balāḥ
mayāparokṣaṁ bhajatā tirohitaṁ
māsūyituṁ mārhatha tat priyaṁ priyāḥ

My dear girls, understanding that simply for my sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the Vedas and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to me. Even when I removed myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, my beloved *gopīs*, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward me, your beloved. (SB 10.32.21)

He disappeared there (*tatra*). He was untraceable. Suddenly, they could not see him. Because he was the Supreme Lord (*keśavaḥ*) that was not impossible for him.

---

[1] Perhaps this means attaining a spiritual form in Vaikuṇṭha. Or some aspects of the pastimes in the material realm are not available in the spiritual world.

Chapter Thirty
The Gopīs Search for Kṛṣṇa

Text 30.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
antarhite bhagavati sahasaiva vrajāṅganāḥ
atapyaṁs tam acakṣāṇāḥ kariṇya iva yūthapam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Kṛṣṇa disappeared so inexplicably, the gopīs felt great sorrow at losing sight of him, like a group of female elephants who have lost their mate.

COMMENTARY: Since Śukadeva felt sorrow in telling about Kṛṣṇa's disappearance, he suddenly stopped speaking and finished the previous chapter.

Śukadeva endowed with *śrī* spoke. Lamenting the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa, he spoke sweet, unclear words like a parrot. Recovering after a moment, he spoke in lamentation. Kṛṣṇa had suddenly disappeared. It was unexplainable. *Sahasā* means unexplainable according to *Amara-koṣa*. This was a cause of great pain. Because the *gopīs* (*vrajāṅganāḥ)* loved him intensely, they suffered greatly in separation. The elephant is said to be skillful at love. Thus the *gopīs*, dependent on Kṛṣṇa, are compared to female elephants suffering separation from a male elephant.

Text 30.2

gatyānurāga-smita-vibhramekṣitair
mano-ramālāpa-vihāra-vibhramaiḥ
ākṣipta-cittāḥ pramadā ramā-pates
tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛhus tad-ātmikāḥ

As the cowherd women remembered Kṛṣṇa, their hearts were overwhelmed by his movements and loving smiles, his playful glances and enchanting talks, and by the many other pastimes he would enjoy with them. Thus absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Rādhā, the gopīs began acting out his various pastimes.

COMMENTARY: Their pain is described. This continues for two chapters. Their minds were overwhelmed by his all his bodily actions (*gati*—physical), by his affectionate smile, by his playful glances (*mental*), because their minds were offered with affection. They were overwhelmed by his attractive conversations (verbal), by his attractive actions such as lifting Govardhana and playing his flute and by his *vibhrama*, activities in *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. *Citta-vṛtty-anavasthānaṁ śṛṅgārād vibhramo mataḥ:* instability of mental functions because of conjugal love is called *vibhrama*. The later elements in the list are of superior excellence. These were previously performed by Kṛṣṇa. They became filled with these memories. Or being overwhelmed in the mind and becoming completely absorbed can be taken as two separate actions since imitating his actions and becoming one with him are described later.

They had extreme pride (*pramadāḥ*). This includes their previous anger as well. Or they had been extremely joyful (*pramadāḥ*), but now were filled with sorrow. They were absorbed in the actions of the husband of Lakṣmī. This indicates his cleverness in love and that they were his wives. Or he was the husband of Rādhā. He was with her. They imitated his actions which were indescribable (*tāḥ tāḥ*). They were incapable of imitating him but did so. Or they imitated all his various activities (*viceṣṭāḥ*). These are natural to women in *prema*. *Priyānukaraṇaṁ līlā*: imitating the lover's actions is called *līlā.* (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 11.28) Or the various pastimes of Kṛṣṇa accepted the women who were absorbed in him.

Text 30.3

gati-smita-prekṣaṇa-bhāṣaṇādiṣu
priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍha-mūrtayaḥ
asāv ahaṁ tv ity abalās tad-ātmikā
nyavediṣuḥ kṛṣṇa-vihāra-vibhramāḥ

Because the beloved gopīs were absorbed in thoughts of their beloved Kṛṣṇa, their bodies imitated his way of moving and smiling, his glances, his speech and other distinctive features. Deeply identifying with and maddened by remembering his pastimes, they declared to one another, "I am Kṛṣṇa!"

COMMENTARY: This verse describes their absorption in Kṛṣṇa. The list was mentioned in the previous verse. *Ādi* indicates his activities and *vibhrama*. Since they were already mentioned, the adjectives used with them are not again mentioned.

Their bodies with senses and limbs (*mūrtayaḥ*) were absorbed in imitating his pastimes. Internally and externally they were overcome with this *bhāva*.

tadā pumān mukta-samasta-bandhanas
tad-bhāva-bhāvānukṛtāśayākṛtiḥ
nirdagdha-bījānuśayo mahīyasā
bhakti-prayogeṇa samety adhokṣajam

By those methods, that person, liberated from all bondage, with mind and body acting for the Lord and thinking of the Lord, having already burned up the seed of desire, achieves a direct meeting with the Supreme Lord through his *rāga-bhakti.* (SB 7.7.36)

They were women (*abalāḥ*) and thus it was suitable that they imitate women. But still, they imitated him. Or because of the pain they were without strength (*abalāḥ*). *Tu* means certainly. They said, "I am he" because of great pain or because of absorption in the pastimes. The reason is given. They were filled with Kṛṣṇa (*tad-ātmikāḥ*).

They did not say, "I am Kṛṣṇa" because of their separation or because they identified with him. Being filled with Kṛṣṇa is natural when one is absorbed in pastimes of *prema*. It does not mean that they became one with him as in *jñāna*. They were affectionate to him (*priyāḥ priyasya*) because he was Kṛṣṇa, most attractive.

Or this identity with Kṛṣṇa can be part of the imitation. They show the imitation in this verse. They say, imitating Kṛṣṇa, "O women! I am that playful lover." It is understood that previously he said this as a joke. Why is the statement not complete? It was their mental creation (*tad-ātmikaḥ*). Or *tad-ātmikā* indicates that the imitation was a complete duplicate. Their activities of kissing, embracing and *vibhrama* were like Kṛṣṇa's actions.

Or *vihāra-vibhramā* can mean that they performed his actions of losing a necklace (*vihāra*—without a necklace). *Kṛṣṇa-vihāra-vibhrama* can also mean that they were completely bewildered about whether Kṛṣṇa was

playing or not, or it can mean that they imitated his playing. The incomplete sentence is because of confusion due to separation.

Or she who had enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa in plenty (*asau*) said, "I am he." Her identity is not revealed out of confusion in separation or out of playfulness. They spoke in this way because their minds were fixed on death (*tad-ātmikāḥ*). They spoke with a desire to die out of great grief because they were mad (*vibhramāḥ*) for the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. They became confused on remembering his pastimes.

Text 30.4

gāyantya uccair amum eva saṁhatā
vicikyur unmattaka-vad vanād vanam
papracchur ākāśa-vad antaraṁ bahir
bhūteṣu santaṁ puruṣaṁ vanaspatīn

Singing loudly of Kṛṣṇa, they searched for him throughout the Vṛndāvana forest like a band of madwomen. They even asked the trees about him, who as the Supersoul is present inside and outside of all created things, just like the sky.

COMMENTARY: Not only did they imitate his actions but, disturbed by separation, they searched for him here and there. They asked all the beings whom they saw in front about him. They sang loudly so that he could hear of their pain or to attract him by singing songs he liked. Or they simple sang as a natural symptom of great pain. Though it is not proper to sing about him since he gave them up and gave them pain, they sang about him only, since he was their sole object of love or their quality was to sing about him.

They gathered together (*saṁhatāḥ*) in order to search for him, or out of friendship they gathered to comfort each other or as a natural response to great pain. They asked the trees about him because they were almost insane (*unmattaka-vat*). The suffix *ka* indicates that the "madness applied to the self". This indicates that their hair was unbound. They began searching and asking questions. They were not completely absorbed in these acts with no sense of discrimination. Otherwise they would not ask trees.[1]

They wandered from forest to forest, for a long time. Just as ether is spread inside and outside so Kṛṣṇa is spread inside and outside all *jīvas* as the *puruṣa*. They asked the trees about him. Or they asked the trees out of madness about Kṛṣṇa who was in front of them, internally and externally in all the bowers (*bhūteṣu*). Or they asked about their master (*puruṣa*). That was their reason for searching and asking. Or they asked the trees out of pain in separation about Kṛṣṇa whom they knew was situated everywhere. They spoke out of great pain. This is the greatness of lack of control because of pain in *prema*.

Text 30.5

dṛṣṭo vaḥ kaccid aśvattha plakṣa nyagrodha no manaḥ
nanda-sūnur gato hṛtvā prema-hāsāvalokanaiḥ

[The gopīs said:] O aśvattha tree, O plakṣa, O nyagrodha, have you seen Kṛṣṇa? That son of Nanda Mahārāja has gone away after stealing our minds with his loving smiles and glances.

COMMENTARY: Has Kṛṣṇa been seen by you? Or has your Kṛṣṇa been seen? They infer a possible relationship with Kṛṣṇa and speak to the trees out of affection. Or they speak this way out of intense *prema*, thinking that others have their *bhāva*. They call to each tree individually, respecting them as devotees. The *aśvattha* is famous as a *vibhūti* of the Lord, a devotee. The Lord says to Arjuna "Know that I am in the banyan tree (*nyagrodha*)." The *plakṣa* tree is their companion. These are the places of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā. The *gopīs* of course would not have this in mind when asking questions, since they were confused by separation. But I will elucidate things according to my promise to follow what Śrīdhara Svāmī explains in the five chapters, rather than according to the *gopīs' bhāva*.

The questions are directed to the trees they see in front of them. They will be explained in the order found in the text. *Nanda-sūna* indicates their master, with the suggestion that he is a *rasika*.

"Why do you ask about him?" He has stolen our minds, which are like gems, and departed. We have come here, not knowing where he is. We ask you righteous trees about the thief. *Kaccit* indicates a question. Please tell us. They cannot complete the statement because of their disturbed state.

We are searching for him with effort at this place. We infer that you have seen him.

He is nearby. Being consoled, we prevent our life airs from leaving and preserve our lives. The sentence is incomplete because they cannot answer properly since they are in great pain (*unmattaka-vat*).

Text 30.6

kaccit kurabakāśoka-nāga-punnāga-campakāḥ
rāmānujo māninīnām ito darpa-hara-smitaḥ

O kurabaka tree, O aśoka, O nāga, punnāga and campaka, has Balarāma's younger brother, whose smile removes the pride of respectable women, passed this way?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Being great souls, they will not speak to us insignificant women. Thus they ask other trees. *Kurabaka* is the *śoṇomlāna* tree and *nāga* refers to the *nāgakeśara* tree. Did he go from here? Or did he disappear here? Previously they asked "Did you see him?" Now they ask "Did he go that way?" It is possible for you to see far away. "He cannot easily be found." Since he came here, we will find his footprints and find him by those footprints. Another version has *gataḥ* instead of *itaḥ.* According to Śrīdhara Svāmī the word *itaḥ* should be added to *gataḥ*. They do not mention his name again for the reason mentioned previously. "How did he steal the minds of women as respectable as you?" His smile steals the pride of even respectable women. He has no discretion in this matter. Just now he has stolen our pride in our position by his false smile. Thus we are looking for him. We cannot live even for a moment in separation from that person who causes great bewilderment. Therefore we ask you about him.

Text 30.7

kaccit tulasi kalyāṇi govinda-caraṇa-priye
saha tvāli-kulair bibhrad dṛṣṭas te 'ti-priyo 'cyutaḥ

O most kind Tulasī, to whom the feet of Govinda are so dear, have you seen that infallible one walk by, wearing you and encircled by swarms of

bees?

COMMENTARY: Since these trees are males, and siding with Kṛṣṇa, out of malice, they do not speak to us on understanding our pride. They then question *Tulasī*, on their side since she was a female, imagining that she has seen him since it was known that she had unlimited fortune by gaining his affection. O *Tulasī* who makes our birth auspicious (*kalyāṇi*)! Or O *Tulasī*, most fortunate! The reason for her fortunate is mentioned: O *Tulasī*, dear to the feet of Govinda, lord of Gokula, revealing unlimited sweetness! You are dearer to him than Mahā-lakṣmī. She aspires for the dust from those feet with great endeavor. But you are naturally dear to Kṛṣṇa's feet. They do not mention his lotus feet since they are angry with him. He wears you, who are accompanied by bees. This means the *tulasī* leaves are within the *vaijayantī* garland.

Or at this time he plucked *tulasī* and wore a garland of *tulasī*. Have you seen him, since he is affectionate to you? The garland is full of honey and thus the bees cannot leave it. Since they buzz with intoxication, it is impossible for him to hide. He must have come to you. And you have seen him. He never leaves you (*acyuta*). This confirms that he must be near.

Ali-kulaiḥ can also mean "with friends." He wears you even though you have many friends. You are dear to him among many. Thus you are very dear to him. On the other hand, he holds many of us dear (*ati-priyaḥ*). Or he holds everyone dear. This is a statement of hatred.

Text 30.8

mālaty adarśi vaḥ kaccin mallike jāti-yūthike
prītiṁ vo janayan yātaḥ kara-sparśena mādhavaḥ

O mālati, O mallikā, O jāti and yūthikā, has Mādhava gone by here, giving you pleasure with the touch of his hand?

COMMENTARY: "Since Tulasī is a co-wife, she will not speak." They then ask Kṛṣṇa's servants. They call out to each one in affection, thinking of the plants as Kṛṣṇa's servants, since they offered suitable flowers to him. He gave you (*vaḥ*) pleasure, or he who is yours (*vaḥ*) gave pleasure to you. Did he come here and give you pleasure by the touch of his hand? Or they

imagine that the flowers saw him. He plucked their excellent flowers with his hand. He must have come near you.

Or he injured you with his nails as a jest. When he cut off the flowers with his nail, they question his motive in plucking flowers. He plucked them for the pastimes of *madhura-rasa* (*mādhavaḥ*) or he plucked them for Lakṣmī (*mādhava*—husband of Lakṣmī). This is uttered in hatred. Actually *mādhava* means the consort of Rādhā. He picked them to decorate her. Though they did not specifically search for this meaning, because of their pure natures, or because of divine arrangement, the words came out of their mouths, revealing the truth spontaneously.

Text 30.9

cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra
jambv-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāḥ
ye 'nye parārtha-bhavakā yamunopakūlāḥ
śaṁsantu kṛṣṇa-padavīṁ rahitātmanāṁ naḥ

O cūta, O priyāla, O panasa, āsana and kovidāra, O jambu, O arka, O bilva, bakula and āmra, O kadamba and nīpa and all you other plants and trees living by the banks of the Yamunā who have dedicated your very existence to the welfare of others, we gopīs have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Those trees will not speak because they are his servants. We will ask trees which are trustworthy like sages. *Cūta* is a creeper mango and *āmra* is a tree mango. The poets called the creeper mango *natāmra.* It was seen in the central states. *Nīpa* is the *dhūli-kadamba,* with huge flowers and plentiful pollen. The seed of the *priyāla* is famous as *cārubīja* and is eaten. *Panasa* is the jackfruit tree. *Āsana* is the yellow *sāla* tree. *Kovidāra* has double leaves and is famous in the Vindyā region as *koyilāva.* It is similar to the *kāñcanāra*. Though the *arka* tree is considered inferior, they asked this tree also since they were full of longing. "What do we gain in telling you about him?" You are dedicated to helping others. You have taken birth to help others. Or another version has *parārtha-bhāvikā*: producing

auspiciousness for others. Since you are living at a holy spot, near the bank (*upakūlāḥ*) of the Yamunā, you speak the truth and are merciful. Thus please tell us the truth. Do not cheat us. "You should search for him yourself." Fearing this answer the *gopīs* speak with pain, hoping to generate compassion for their suffering state, "We have lost all consciousness. We are near death. We cannot search by ourselves." Previously they asked the other trees if they had seen Kṛṣṇa but did not receive an answer. Now they cleverly ask only for the path he took.

Text 30.10

kiṁ te kṛtaṁ kṣiti tapo bata keśavāṅghri-
sparśotsavotpulakitāṅga-nahair vibhāsi
apy aṅghri-sambhava urukrama-vikramād vā
āho varāha-vapuṣaḥ parirambhaṇena

O mother earth, what piety did you perform to attain the touch of Keśava's lotus feet, which has brought you such great joy that your bodily hairs are standing on end? You appear very beautiful in this condition. Was it perhaps when he stepped upon you in his form of the dwarf Vāmana, or even earlier, when he embraced you in his form of the boar Varāha?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Asking about the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, they glance at the earth and then assume that the earth must have seen him since the earth is spread everywhere. They consider her sprouts of grass to be her hairs standing on end out of joy on being touched by his lotus feet. They then describe her great fortune while indicating his excellence. You must have done pious acts (*tapaḥ*) to touch his feet. Has the touch of his feet created your joy? *Api* indicates a question. *Śruti* says *tredhā viṣṇu-vicakrame*: Viṣṇu took three steps. Has your joy arisen from Trivikrama stepping with his feet to cover the three worlds, showing his power? That cannot be, since why would you show such joy now, after such a long time? Maybe it was not just touching with the foot, but Varāha lifting you up and enjoying you.

Or, what was your previous act by which you attained joy in being touched by Kṛṣṇa's feet? Was it being touched by Trivikrama's feet? Was it being embraced by Varāha? Please tell us. This indicates Kṛṣṇa's greater glory. How can we endure separation then? You are most fortunate and we are most unfortunate. Be merciful and show us his path.

Text 30.11

apy eṇa-patny upagataḥ priyayeha gātrais
tanvan dṛśāṁ sakhi su-nirvṛtim acyuto vaḥ
kāntāṅga-saṅga-kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ
kunda-srajaḥ kula-pater iha vāti gandhaḥ

O friend, wife of the deer, has Acyuta been here with his beloved, bringing great joy to your eyes by his limbs? Indeed, blowing this way is the fragrance of his garland of kunda flowers, which was smeared with the kuṅkuma from the breasts of his girlfriend when he embraced her.

COMMENTARY: The earth will not speak since, like Tulasī, she has the Lord's affection and thus is a competitor, or she just does not want to speak. They then inquire from the doe, believing that she is a friend. O wife of the deer! You know about suffering in separation from a lover. Therefore please tell us. In great distress, in the distance, they see one doe. However *dṛśām* and *vaḥ* are in the plural, out of respect for her, since Kṛṣṇa has approached her. Or *eṇa-patni* in the singular refers to a class rather than an individual doe. Or out of many does, they ask the question to one only, who is the principal doe. Has he come here with some *gopī*? Did he give the greatest bliss to your eyes by showing his limbs? Otherwise you would not have such wide eyes, caused by happiness. He has given bliss greater than liberation (*su-nirvṛtim*). He must have revealed himself splendidly, otherwise you could not be so blissful.

O friend! The doe is addressed as a friend because she has a similar love for Kṛṣṇa, and she plays with the *gopīs* in the forest. You should not cheat us. Acyuta did not fail to distribute bliss, or he did not fail to come here. It seems they are familiar with his scent for they say that the wind is carrying his scent. It was previously said:

upagīyamāna udgāyan vanitā-śata-yūthapaḥ
mālāṁ bibhrad vaijayantīṁ vyacaran maṇḍayan vanam

With the *gopīs* singing his praises, that leader of hundreds of groups of women sang loudly. He wandered in the forest wearing his Vaijayantī garland, beautifying the Vṛndāvana forest. (SB 10.29.44)

kaccit tulasi kalyāṇi govinda-caraṇa-priye
saha tvāli-kulair bibhrad dṛṣṭas te 'ti-priyo 'cyutaḥ

O most kind *Tulasī,* to whom the feet of Govinda are so dear, have you seen that infallible one walk by, wearing you and encircled by swarms of bees? (SB 10.30.7)

Now he is wearing a jasmine garland. Thus he had three garlands. Or the *vaijayantī* garland was being worn and then he put on a *tulasī* garland when it appeared. Because the jasmine garland is beautiful in the moonlit night, he gave up the *vaijayantī* garland and put on the jasmine garland. *Kula-pateḥ* mean "of the king of Gokula, or the master of the *gopīs*." Kṛṣṇa's name is not directly mentioned out of shyness or cleverness. Having him alone as our master, we cannot maintain our lives in his absence. Therefore please quickly tell us.

Or he is the master (*pati*) of persons who speak badly (*kula*). It is befitting that she is with such a person. They speak in hatred. Or he has associated with you (*upagataḥ*) and is still here. "Then search for him and find him." He brought joy by his limbs. He has been seen by you, who are most fortunate. We cannot see him. "They are not here." But the wind carries his fragrance.

Text 30.12

bāhuṁ priyāṁsa upadhāya gṛhīta-padmo
rāmānujas tulasikāli-kulair madāndhaiḥ
anvīyamāna iha vas taravaḥ praṇāmaṁ
kiṁ vābhinandati caran praṇayāvalokaiḥ

O trees! When the younger brother of Balarāma walked by here, followed by intoxicated bees swarming around the Tulasī buds decorating his garland, his arm on the shoulder of his beloved, holding a lotus in his

right hand, did he acknowledge your obeisances with his affectionate glances?

COMMENTARY: Unsure when the doe remained staring, thinking that they were stunned with great sorrow on seeing the pain of separation in the *gopīs*, the *sakhīs* left the doe and, seeing trees bowing low with fruits and flowers, thinking they were decent and offering respects, they inquired from them.

Inferring that a lover had come with Kṛṣṇa by her fragrance previously mentioned, they now imagine the fragrance of her shoulder mixed with his arm. The fragrance of his hand was mixed with the fragrance of a lotus he was holding. This was mixed with the fragrance of her shoulder.

There was also the fragrance of the *tulasī* on his body. Or they think that putting his arm on her shoulder has been arranged by some voluptuous woman.

He was followed by swarms of bees, blind with intoxication attracted to the sweet fragrance of the *tulasī*. The bees were attracted to the *tulasī* because the *tulasī* was related to Kṛṣṇa. All of this manifests a special *rasa*. Thinking his secret pastimes with his lover would be detected by the loud humming of the bees which were blind with intoxication, he tried walking away to get rid of them and came here, or he came here to pick the flowers from you plants.

Or he came here thinking of giving mercy to you, since you are plants, similar to *tulasī* while fulfilling his own purposes. And particularly out of affection for your offering of respects, he came here. Did he accept you with affectionate glances? Those glances are very rare. *Kimvā* indicates a question. Please tell us.

Or seeing his footprints and, to the left, a woman's footprints, and seeing, to the right, the trees bowing down as if having achieved relief, they assumed he held a lotus in his right hand. Seeing groups of a woman's footprints, deep and grouped together as if running in fear, they assumed that intoxicated bees had come. Or seeing drops of honey everywhere on the footprints, they assumed the bees had come. Or in an insane condition they uttered these words. This is mentioned in verse 14.

Or since the intoxicated bees followed him, he also, by contact, became intoxicated. They say this in anger. Or he is followed by proud bees (*mada*). It is suitable then that he is followed by us, who have developed pride.

Text 30.13

pṛcchatemā latā bāhūn apy āśliṣṭā vanaspateḥ
nūnaṁ tat-karaja-spṛṣṭā bibhraty utpulakāny aho

Let us ask these creepers about Kṛṣṇa. Even though they are embracing the arms of their husband, this tree, they certainly must have been touched by Kṛṣṇa's fingernails, since out of joy they are manifesting eruptions on their skin.

COMMENTARY: The trees are his devotees and follow him. They will not speak. We will ask the creepers, since they are female, like us. They say to each other, "Let us ask the creepers. They are embracing the arms of their husbands. This is our *bhāva* also."

Text 30.14

ity unmatta-vaco gopyaḥ kṛṣṇānveṣaṇa-kātarāḥ
līlā bhagavatas tās tā hy anucakrus tad-ātmikāḥ

Having spoken these words, the gopīs, distraught from searching for Kṛṣṇa, began to act out his various pastimes, fully absorbed in thoughts of him.

COMMENTARY: Speaking in this way (*iti)* the *gopīs* enacted Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Or with insane words, as was mentioned previously (*unmattaka*), they enacted his pastimes. The repetition of *unmatta* from verse 4 emphasizes their condition. Though they should not be called insane, from their questions to the various objects, this is the conclusion.

They imitated Kṛṣṇa's pastimes because they were pained by separation, after searching for he who is most attractive (*kṛṣṇa*). Because of the pain, they imitated him, not whimsically, or thinking that it would create happiness. They did this because their hearts were stolen by him (*tad-ātmikāḥ*). Or *tad-ātmikāḥ* can mean that they became absorbed in the pastimes in order to enact them.

Or “By remembering him, the *prāṇas* of those who are pained by separation will suffer more. By the ghee of imitating the pastimes, how can the *ātmā* remain in the hearts of those burning from the fire of increased separation?” Their *ātmās* dedicated to imitating him with pastimes (*tad-ātmikāḥ*) will not leave, because they have a relationship with a sweet, soothing ocean. If they remain in any other condition however, they will burn up.

Or *tad-ātmikāḥ* can mean that they were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. Their imitations depended on this. In this case, they were not whimsical.

Text 30.15

kasyācit pūtanāyantyāḥ kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam
tokayitvā rudaty anyā padāhan śakaṭāyatīm

One gopī imitated Pūtanā, while another acted like infant Kṛṣṇa and pretended to suck her breast. Another gopī, crying in imitation of infant Kṛṣṇa, kicked a gopī who was taking the role of the cart demon, Śakaṭāsura.

COMMENTARY: Their imitation is described in nine verses (15-23). *Anucakruḥ* in the previous verse indicates that the imitation was complete. They became absorbed in the enactment. Otherwise, it would have just been stated that they imitated Kṛṣṇa. One can imitate the bodily actions with one’s body, verbal actions with one’s speech and mental activities with the mind. Though one truly imitates by assuming the mood of the other person, it depends on these three elements. First, three examples of bodily imitation are described.

One *gopī* imitated Pūtanā, by using her gestures, not by dress, since that was lacking at the time. The next verses explain that one *gopī* thought she was Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇārbha-bhāvavān*). This was done in the confusion generated from separation. Even though not perfectly accomplished, it occurred because of the nature of pain in separation, with absorption in the pastimes.

Though it is not proper for exalted devotees to imitate demons, they were overcome with special, indescribable *bhāvas* and thus imitated his pastimes, thinking that their friends were also overcome with such *bhāvas*.

With intention, they imitated Pūtanā and others in order to dissipate their great suffering by contact with his mind by doing that.

(alternative explanation of verse 14) Or *iti* means thus they were pained by searching for Kṛṣṇa. The pastimes next (*anu*) made all the *gopīs* who were suffering separation become full of the pastimes (*tad-ātmikāḥ*). Thus it was suitable that they portray demons, since demons were involved in the pastimes. They were not at fault. One *gopī* imitated sucking her breast, not actually sucking her breast, since it was an imitation. This applies to later actions also. One imitated a cart above another *gopī* who imitated Kṛṣṇa.

Text 30.16

daityāyitvā jahārānyām eko kṛṣṇārbha-bhāvanām
riṅgayām āsa kāpy aṅghrī karṣantī ghoṣa-niḥsvanaiḥ

One gopī took the role of Tṛṇāvarta and carried away another, who was acting like infant Kṛṣṇa, while yet another gopī crawled about, her ankle bells tinkling as she pulled her feet.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

One *gopī* imitated the mood of Kṛṣṇa as a baby, and became absorbed in fear. One *gopī* crawled, making sounds like ankle bells, or employing ankle bells since she already had ankle bells on her feet. In this way she imitated Kṛṣṇa crawling about.

Text 30.17

kṛṣṇa-rāmāyite dve tu gopāyantyaś ca kāścana
vatsāyatīṁ hanti cānyā tatraikā tu bakāyatīm

Two gopīs acted like Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa in the midst of several others, who took the role of cowherd boys. One gopī enacted Kṛṣṇa's killing of the demon Vatsāsura, represented by another gopī, and a pair of gopīs acted out the killing of Bakāsura.

COMMENTARY: Two *gopīs* took the roles of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and others took the roles of cowherd boys to enact herding the calves. The word *ca* indicates that a *gopī* also imitated Aghāsura. The present tense is used to indicate that the event was not long ago.

Text 30.18

āhūya dūra-gā yadvat kṛṣṇas tam anuvartatīm
veṇuṁ kvaṇantīṁ krīḍantīm anyāḥ śaṁsanti sādhv iti

When one gopī perfectly imitated how Kṛṣṇa would call the cows who had wandered far away, how he would play his flute and how he would engage in various sports, the others congratulated her with exclamations of "Well done! Well done!"

COMMENTARY: Now vocal imitation is described in five verses (18-22). Various pastimes before killing Pralamba are imitated in two verses (18-19). Since it was a vocal imitation, or because of greater and greater absorption in imitating, there is no mention of imitating Kṛṣṇa's other actions. He called the cows situated far off in Vraja, just as he called the *gopīs* with the sound of his flute. Some praised others who had taken the role of cowherds *(anuvartatīm*), singing, etc.

Text 30.19

kasyāñcit sva-bhujaṁ nyasya calanty āhāparā nanu
kṛṣṇo 'haṁ paśyata gatiṁ lalitām iti tan-manāḥ

Another gopī, her mind fixed on Kṛṣṇa, walked about with her arm resting on the shoulder of a friend and declared, "I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I dance!"

COMMENTARY: One *gopī* said with certainty (*nunam*), "I am Kṛṣṇa." You should not doubt this. Or O cowherds! Or O *gopīs*! (*nunam*) See my attractive movements or how I attractively walk. She was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*tan-manāḥ*). Thus there is no fault in saying this. "I am Kṛṣṇa, full of all qualities. See the *gopī* Lalitā, who has taken shelter of me (*gatim*)." Do you remember this? Kṛṣṇa had previously said this. Why is the statement not complete? Her mind was taken by Kṛṣṇa (*tan-matāḥ*). Or she was absorbed in the imitation.

Text 30.20

mā bhaiṣṭa vāta-varṣābhyāṁ tat-trāṇaṁ vihitaṁ maya
ity uktvaikena hastena yatanty unnidadhe 'mbaram

“Don’t be afraid of the wind and rain,” said one *gopī*. “I will save you.” And with that she lifted her shawl above her head.

COMMENTARY: Absorbed in imitation, she used only words, or absorbed in the pastime, she felt as if the wind was actually present. This is also true of verse 22 and other enactments. This indicates that because of the separation, they had lost strength to enact with the whole body. She held her shawl high or for a long time, imitating lifting Govardhana.

Text 30.21

āruhyaikā padākramya śirasy āhāparāṁ nṛpa
duṣṭāhe gaccha jāto ’haṁ khalānām nanu daṇḍa-kṛt

O King, one gopī climbed on another’s shoulders and, putting her foot on the other’s head, said, “Go away from here, O wicked snake! You should know that I have taken birth in this world just to punish the wicked.”

COMMENTARY: *Nanu* indicates certainty or an exclamation. One version has *nṛpa* (O King)! This expresses astonishment. O Kāliya (*duṣṭāhe*)! Go from this place. Otherwise I will punish you. Using her feet, putting them on the head of another *gopī,* she spoke.

Text 30.22

tatraikovāca he gopā dāvāgniṁ paśyatolbaṇam
cakṣūṁṣy āśv apidadhvaṁ vo vidhāsye kṣemam añjasā

Then another gopī spoke: My dear cowherd boys, look at this raging forest fire! Quickly close your eyes and I will easily protect you.

COMMENTARY: One version has *tatra ca uvāca*: after enacting Kāliya’s punishment, then one *gopī* spoke. This event took place there (*tatra*). Saving them from the forest fire also (*ca*) took place in the reed grove. Thus he saved the cowherds twice. Or *tatra ca* can mean “among the *gopīs*, one said.” She imitated the fire in the reed grove. *Añjasā* means easily.

Text 30.23

baddhānyayā srajā kācit tanvī tatra ulūkhale
badhnāmi bhāṇḍa-bhettāraṁ haiyaṅgava-muṣaṁ tv iti
bhītā su-dṛk pidhāyāsyaṁ bheje bhīti-viḍambanam

One *gopī* tied up her slender companion with a flower garland and said, "Now I will bind this boy who has broken the butter pots and stolen the butter, to this mortar." The second *gopī* then covered her face, pretending to be afraid by the movements of her eyes.

COMMENTARY: Now imitation, which is predominantly mental, is described. One *gopī*, different from the others, a messenger who was more elderly (*anyayā*), following behind, acted as the mother. Or one *gopīs* who was most gentle, most outstanding acted like his mother. Previously his mother had bound him up with a very soft rope of cow hair. Or first with a garland, and then with another material (*anyayā*) a *gopī* acting as Kṛṣṇa was bound up. Attempting to tie him up many times, they were able to bind him with a garland. They acted according to their fancy.

One *gopī* was thin. Because of the pain of separation, she immediately became thin. Out of *prema* they imitated the Lord being controlled by his devotees. *Tatra* can mean "in that imitation" or among the *gopīs* (*tatra*) one became the mortar. One *gopī* imitated fear by moving her eyes and covered her face with her hands. This is a quality of a small child when he is afraid. She imitated his characteristics of fear: trembling, hairs standing on end, crying slightly, and a pitiful voice.

By imitating fear, it is an imitation of his mentality. Fear is a product of the mind. The Dāmodara pastime, which shows he is controlled by the devotee, is the best of all pastimes. Thus it is at the end, since one should conclude with sweetness: *madhureṇa samāpayet*.

Since killing Dhenuka and Pralambha were done by Balarāma, they were not enacted. They did not imitate Kṛṣṇa's stealing the *gopīs* clothing or attracting the wives of the *brāhmaṇas,* since they were shy. They did not consider the particular *rasas* of each pastime, since they all concluded in the soul of the *rasas* (Kṛṣṇa). Breaking the Yamalāruna trees was not imitated as it was included in the Dāmodara pastime. The pastimes imitated are not in the correct order because Śukadeva, in describing the *gopīs* bewilderment in separation, attained a similar *bhāva* and gave up inspecting the sequence closely. Or the *gopīs* imitated the pastimes in the order written, from lesser to major pastimes among single or group enactments. Or they manifested the pastimes from single to group

enactments. Or because of pain in separation or absorption in the enactments, they lost awareness of the correct order.

Text 30.24

evaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ pṛcchamānā vṛndāvana-latās tarūn
vyacakṣata vanoddeśe padāni paramātmanaḥ

While the gopīs were thus imitating Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and asking Vṛndāvana's creepers and trees, in part of the forest they happened to see footprints of the root form of all beings.

COMMENTARY: Asking the creepers in this way (*evam*) or imitating his pastimes as described and asking the creepers, they saw footprints, because Kṛṣṇa attracted all their hearts. Falling within their sight, they saw the footprints on the ground. Previously they only thought of the footprints (SB 10.30.10). Now they directly saw them. Or previously they saw the footprints but because they were bewildered by *prema*, it was as if they did not see them, since they did not look closely. Therefore they did not follow those footprints. Now, recovering slightly because of imitating with absorption, their intelligence arose. They now saw what they previously could not recognize. Thus the affix *vi* is added to indicate special seeing.

They saw the footprints of he who was the dearest (*paramātmanaḥ*). Even though it was night, they could recognize his footprints by their (footprints') characteristics. Or when the twilight passed and the autumn full moon rose, they could see clearly in the moonlight even to a distance. Or they simply saw the footprints while asking questions.

Text 30.25

padāni vyaktam etāni nanda-sūnor mahātmanaḥ
lakṣyante hi dhvajāmbhoja-vajrāṅkuśa-yavādibhiḥ

[The gopīs said:] The marks of a flag, lotus, thunderbolt, elephant goad, barleycorn and so forth on these footprints clearly distinguish them as belonging to that great soul, the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY: They speak to each other. Clearly these are the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and no one else because they are marked with the flag and other

symbols, which indicate a *mahā-puruṣa*. *Ādhibhiḥ* indicates other signs also.

vilokyaika bhuvaṁ prāha gopīr gopa-varāṅganā
pulakācita-sarvāṅgī vikaśi nayanotpalā
dhvaja-vajrāāṅkuśābjāṅka-rekhāvanty āli paśyata
padānyetāni kṛṣṇaysa līlāṅkṛta-gāminaḥ

Seeing those footprints one *gopī,* best of the cowherd women, her hairs standing on end, with wide eyes, said "O friends! Look at the footprints of Kṛṣṇa, who walks about ornamented with pastimes. Those prints are marked with the flag, thunderbolt, goad, and lotus!" *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

dakṣiṇasya padāṅguṣṭha-mūle cakraṁ bibharty ajaḥ
tatra bhakta-janasyāri-ṣaḍ-varga-cchedanāya saḥ

At the base of the large toe on his right foot, the unborn Lord carries the mark of a disc, which cuts down the six [mental] enemies of his devotees. *Skanda Purāṇa*

madhyamāṅguli-mūle ca dhatte kamalam acyutaḥ
dhyātṛ-citta-dvirephāṇāṁ lobhanāyāti-śobhanām

At the bottom of the middle toe of that same foot Lord Acyuta has a lotus flower, which increases the greed for him in the minds of the beelike devotees who meditate on his feet. *Skanda Purāṇa*

padmasyādho dhvajaṁ dhatte sarvānarthajayadhvajam

Below the lotus is a flag which conquers all *anarthas*. *Skanda Purāṇa*

kaniṣṭha-mūlato vajraṁ bhakta-pāpādri-bhedanam
pārṣṇi-madhye 'ṅkuśaṁ bhakta cittebha-vaśa-kāriṇam

At the base of his small toe is a thunderbolt, which smashes the mountains of his devotees' reactions to past sins, and in the middle of his heel is the mark of an elephant goad, which brings the elephants of his devotees' minds under control. *Skanda Purāṇa*

bhoga-sampan-mayaṁ dhatte yavam aṅguṣṭha-parvaṇi

The joint of his right large toe bears the mark of a barleycorn, representing all kinds of enjoyable opulences. *Skanda Purāṇa*

tathā vāma padāṅguṣṭhamūlatas tanmukhaṁ daram
sarvavidyāprakāśāya dadhāti bhagavan asau
padmādīny api cihnāni tatra dakṣināpādavat

At the base of the left foot is a conch which bestows all knowledge. There are also lotus and other symbols similar to those on the right foot. *Skanda Purāṇa*

Text 30.26

tais taiḥ padais tat-padavīm anvicchantyo 'grato'balāḥ
vadhvāḥ padaiḥ su-pṛktāni vilokyārtāḥ samabruvan

The gopīs began following Kṛṣṇa's path, as shown by his many footprints, but when they saw that these prints were thoroughly intermixed with those of his dearest consort, they became perturbed and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: They followed his path by the footprints marked with the symbols. The repetition (*tais taiḥ*) suggests that the footprints were scattered in many places or there were isolated footprints.

Thought weak (*abalāḥ*) from separation and searching, they searched in front for his path, or they saw in front his footprints mixed with those of another *gopī* (*vadhvāḥ*), or of someone who was like a daughter-in-law, since the prints were delicate, because she appeared to be shy. Or this means Rādhā, who was famous in Gokula as Kṛṣṇa's wife, since Yaśodā had that desire and expressed it sometimes. Her name is not directly stated but simply written as *vadhu.*

kāpi tena samaṁ yātā kṛtapuṇyā madālasā
padāni yasyāś caitāni ghanāny alpatanūni ca

Someone with great piety, pride and lethargy arising from love has gone with him. Her footprints are deep and thin. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

His prints were very mixed (*supṛktāni*) with hers since her arm was on his shoulder. He had not left the others because of anger, hatred or detachment, but to lead one among them away. She had been with them, but by some signal he left with her. His footprints appeared at a distance, and then after walking for some time met with hers.

They were pained because he had accepted one of them and given up the others. Or though pained by separation, they spoke to each other while reflecting on the situation.

Text 30.27

kasyāḥ padāni caitāni yātāyā nanda-sūnunā
aṁsa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ kareṇoḥ kariṇā yathā

[The gopīs said:] Here we see the footprints of some gopī who must have been walking along with the son of Nanda Mahārāja. Her arm is on his shoulder, just as an elephant is accompanied by a she-elephant.

COMMENTARY: What is this? We should recognize the footprints of whoever has gone off with Kṛṣṇa. With pleasure he placed her arm on his shoulder. Or he did this to lead her far away with force so that they could travel easily, since she was stumbling in the dark. It indicates that he was especially affectionate to her. They are compared to a pair of elephants, since the two wander together out of desire and affection.

Text 30.28

anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ

Certainly this particular gopī has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Lord who takes away distress, Govinda, since he was so pleased with her that he abandoned the rest of us and brought her to a secluded place.

COMMENTARY: Some *gopīs* speak of her good fortune in joy, without mentioned the *gopī's* name, since they recognized the footprints as Rādhā's and were relieved. *Nūnam* indicates conjecture or certainty. Nārāyaṇa (*bhagavān*), who takes away all distress (*hariḥ*), who is capable of fulfilling the desires of the devotees, or is independent (*īśvaraḥ*), is controlled by (*ārādhitaḥ*) her, not by us. If he had not gone with her, we would not be suffering in separation. *Rādhā* means "one who controls or worships." As lord of Gokula (*govinda*), he has given us up though we and she are equal. Leaving us in the forest in the night, he has brought her to a place where we cannot go (*rahaḥ*).

Or Govinda only was worshipped by her. She was most fortunate. Govinda reveals his unlimited powers, removes all suffering or is attractive with his form and qualities (*hariḥ*) and is the lord of the lives of the people of Vraja. She has realized this person. Or he was controlled by the *gopī* whom he loved (*yat prītaḥ*) and whom he took away. Or he was controlled by the *gopī* whom he took away, going with her secretly.

Text 30.29

dhanyā aho amī ālyo govindāṅghry-abja-reṇavaḥ
yān brahmeśau ramā devī dadhur mūrdhny agha-nuttaye

O friends! The dust of Govinda's lotus feet is so sacred that even Brahmā, Śiva and Lakṣmī take that dust upon their heads to dispel sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY: O friends (*ālyaḥ*). They are addressed to make them unified in mind or to generate special *bhakti*. This (*amī*) dust is most fortunate. In listing Brahmā, Śiva and Lakṣmī, the word *ca* is not used, to show that they are all prominent. However, the last in the list is most excellent (Lakṣmī). They take his foot dust on their heads. The *gopīs* see this all the time. This is what they saw, not an admission of his great powers. Ramādevī means Lakṣmī and excludes Rādhā. Or in taking the foot dust, Lakṣmī is indicated to have developed *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Thus she is worshippable as *devī.* Or since Rādhā and Lakṣmī are generally the same, *devī* is used to indicate Lakṣmī. As a *devī,* Lakṣmī never touches her feet on the earth. Or *devī* means Vraja-devī, Rādhā.

They place the dust on their heads as an indication of their *bhakti*. They do this to destroy offenses or the suffering from separation (*agha-nuttaye*). They are without offenses but we are full of offenses since we do not hold the dust on our heads. Or the dust is the highest (*dhanyaḥ*) or capable of giving the treasure of Kṛṣṇa's form. Or this dust which exists in Vaikuṇṭha and has fallen in the cow pens or this dust which we previously saw, unmixed with her footprints, is most excellent. This is a statement of envy. Or this dust and this friend (in the plural to show respect for Rādhā), having been taken away by Kṛṣṇa, are fortunate. Like the dust, she is fortunate. Even Lakṣmī and others bow before her.

Text 30.30

tasyā amūni naḥ kṣobhaṁ kurvanty uccaiḥ padāni yat
yaikāpahṛtya gopīnām raho bhunkte 'cyutādharam
na lakṣyante padāny atra tasyā nūnaṁ tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ
khidyat sujātāṅghri-talām unninye preyasīṁ priyaḥ

These footprints of that special *gopī* cause us great pain. She alone has taken him away to a secluded place, where she is enjoying the lips of Kṛṣṇa, which belong to all of us. Look, we can't see her footprints over here! The lover lifted up his beloved whose tender feet were pained by the sprouts.

COMMENTARY: The friends of Candrāvalī speak. The footprints cause us great (*ucchaiḥ*) pain, or make us lose our composure, because of what was said about them. Or the footprints being offered on our heads with pride give us pain. She has taken him alone for private enjoyment. Or since she stole him,

he came here to avoid all the other *gopīs*. Otherwise, why would he come here?

She enjoys his lips which belong to all of us. Another version has *dhanam* (treasure) instead of *raho*. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains *dhanam* as meaning "all in all." But *raho* is the commonest version.

She enjoys the lips of the person who does not give her up and go elsewhere (*acyuta*). Or she enjoys the lips of he who does not give up that enjoyment. Or she enjoys the lips which were enjoyed by us already (*cyuta*).

Or should those footprints which by-passed us (*ucchaiḥ*) cause us disturbance? No. This is a statement made by all of them. He has lifted up this most loved one on his shoulders. This is understood from verse 39. They say this to slander her. All of them were dear to Kṛṣṇa but among all of them, he has affection for her the most. Therefore lifting her up is to be expected. Or he lifted her with both hands onto his lap. By embraces, etc., it is understood that she was the dearest.

Text 30.31

imāny adhika-magnāni padāni vahato vadhūm
gopyaḥ paśyata kṛṣṇasya bhārākrāntasya kāminaḥ

atrāvaropitā kāntā puṣpa-hetor mahātmanā

Please observe, my dear gopīs, how in this place lusty Kṛṣṇa's footprints are pressed more deeply into the ground because of carrying the weight of his beloved. Over here that intelligent boy must have put her down to gather some flowers.

COMMENTARY: The symptoms are described. O *gopīs*! Being skillful in love, you should see this. Kṛṣṇa is lusty (*kāminaḥ*), otherwise he would not do this. This is a statement uttered in hatred. Actually it indicates great control over him. For the other party, it indicates that he had a great attachment to her. This verse is not seen in many versions.

Later they see her footprints in front. The skillful lover (*mahātmanaḥ*) or he who is most intelligent put her down to pick flowers. This line is seen in some editions.

Text 30.32

atra prasūnāvacayaḥ priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ
prapadākramaṇa ete paśyatāsakale pade

Just see how in this place dear Kṛṣṇa collected flowers for his beloved. Here he has left the impression of only the front part of his feet because he was standing on his toes to reach the flowers.

COMMENTARY: The flowers were picked by the most beloved (*preyasā*) for his beloved (*priyārthe*). This is the opposite of the previous statement *preyasīṁ priya (*verse 30*,* Kṛṣṇa lifted up his lover*)*. This indicates that they were equal in affection. Or because he lifted her, he considered her the best. Now she is considered the dearest, since he followed her order to pick flowers. He raised both his feet. This indicates that one can pick many flowers by standing in one place at one of the many flowering trees. Or standing on his toes each time in front of many trees, he picked flowers.

puṣpāvacayam atroccaiś cakre dāmodaro dhruvam
yenāgrākrānti-mātrāṇi padāny atra mahātmanaḥ

Kṛṣṇa certainly picked many flowers here because there are many prints of only the tips of his feet. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

Text 30.33

keśa-prasādhanaṁ tv atra kāminyāḥ kāminā kṛtam
tāni cūḍayatā kāntām upaviṣṭam iha dhruvam

Certainly this lusty person arranged the hair of the lusty woman here. He must have sat here making a crown for his beloved.

COMMENTARY: He arranged her hair using his fingers or a comb placed in her hair. The word *tu* indicates a new topic. Another version has *hi,* meaning "certainly." The goal of dressing her hair is stated: out of lust (*kāminā*), he has dressed the hair of a lusty woman. Or it can mean simply that he was under her control. The symptoms were directly manifested (*dhruvam*).

Text 30.34

reme tayā cātma-rata ātmārāmo 'py akhaṇḍitaḥ
kāmināṁ darśayan dainyaṁ strīṇāṁ caiva durātmatām

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Kṛṣṇa enjoyed constantly with that gopī, although he enjoys only within, and although he is satisfied with his many eternal consorts. Thus by contrast he showed the wretchedness of ordinary lusty men and hardhearted women.

COMMENTARY: He enjoyed in himself or by himself (*ātma-rataḥ*). Or he was satisfied naturally. He enjoyed everything (*ca*). Though he was satisfied with himself, he enjoyed. He no longer was satisfied with himself. This was stated previously. It is repeated for emphasis. This means he was satisfied with her. He enjoyed with her. He was controlled by her actions of *vibhrama.* Being conquered by her *prema*, he offered everything to her. It is not a fault for the Lord who is affectionate to his devotees and is controlled by the *prema* of the devotee. Rather, it is a great quality, manifested as the essence of his nature as Bhagavān. This has previously been mentioned in many places and is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Or he is attracted to friends who are like his self (*ātma-rataḥ*). Or he was attracted to the *gopīs* who were dear as himself. Even so, he enjoyed completely (*akhaṇḍitaḥ*), with attachment of his mind, words and body, with this *gopī*.

Not only did he make his eternal beloved full of bliss, but he gave benefit to others. He taught that one should not be controlled by lust and women.

Just as the Lord teaches men by his conduct, his beloved teaches women. They showed that such conduct is foolish.

Though such behavior and anger is not foolish, but increases *prema* between the two great lovers, and though it is proper as an independent lover, pride and the statements uttered by the Lord are not proper. This is the explanation according to scriptures following rules. There is no fault in these scriptures since they are simply teaching the common people.

Or this shows the misery of Indra and other lusty people (*kāmināṁ*) because of the presence of envy, since there is no happiness in the actions of a material lover. Women are foolish (*durātmatāṁ*) for worshipping a low husband who is not Kṛṣṇa.

Or they teach about misery to lusty men and about foolishness to women. Though there is pleasure in love play, men with inclination to enjoy being controlled by women will make the women miserable. Women giving up shyness in acts of love and controlling men will make them independent and inclined to sinful acts.

This can be concluded because of their future words and behavior or it is the intention of their previous behavior. Or the behavior in loving affairs has been shown. The wickedness of various techniques mentioned in *kāma-śāstra,* with the woman on the man's shoulders, is shown. The words *dainyam* and *durātmatā* are employed while thinking of sages engaged in *jñāna*. Actually it is a playful use of words because of special *rasa*.

Or *ātma-rata* means *ātma-rate.* To lusty men he showed the misery (*dainyam*) in enjoying selfishly, since enjoyment is not attained. To women, he showed the foolishness of enjoying selfishly, since service to the husband is not accomplished. To show this, ignoring being self-satisfied, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with her. These words are suitable for the women of Vraja since it is full of special *rasa*, not deviating from the Lord's *bhāva*, with knowledge of the Lord's nature.

Texts 30.35–36

ity evaṁ darśayantyas tāś cerur gopyo vicetasaḥ
yāṁ gopīm anayat kṛṣṇo vihāyānyāḥ striyo vane

sā ca mene tadātmānaṁ variṣṭhaṁ sarva-yoṣitām
hitvā gopīḥ kāma-yānā mām asau bhajate priyaḥ

As the gopīs wandered about, their minds completely bewildered, they pointed out various signs of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The particular gopī whom Kṛṣṇa had led into a secluded forest when he had abandoned all the other young girls began to think herself the best of women. She thought, "My beloved has rejected all the other gopīs, even though they are driven by Cupid himself. He has chosen to reciprocate with me alone."

COMMENTARY: They showed the signs of the couple's play one after the other or explained them. Or speaking in this way *(iti*) and showing the signs, filled with the pain of separation (*tāḥ*), without intelligence or helpless because of separation (*vicetasaḥ*), since they had love only for him, they wandered about or went forward.

Some said, "When she was among the others, she did not have such pride. It arose at this time (*tadā*)." But actually, *tadā* means "having such *rati*" she thought in this way. Or she thought herself most enjoyed by him (*tadā*) among all the women of Vraja, because he gave up all *gopīs*, though they were also loved by him (*kāmayānā*). He, having indescribable, wondrous glories, which are supremely independent and most rare (*asau*), who loves only me (*priya*), follows me. Or though he loves the others also, he follows me. The pride of the *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*, the best of skillful women lovers, nourishes *rasa*. His response and mercy will manifest later.

Text 30.37

tato gatvā vanoddeśaṁ dṛptā keśavam abravīt
na pāraye 'haṁ calituṁ naya māṁ yatra te manaḥ

As the two lovers passed through one part of the Vṛndāvana forest, the special gopī began feeling proud of herself. She told Kṛṣṇa who had tied up her hair, "I cannot walk any further. Please lead me wherever you want to go."

COMMENTARY: After thinking herself superior, or because of her pride, from that place of enjoyment, she went to a special place in the forest with him. Or because of being proud (*dṛptāḥ*), she proceeded on her own (*gatvā*), thinking, "This is my mercy to him." She spoke to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord

or who benefited Vraja by killing Keśī (*keśavam*), or who was bewildered by her beauty after binding her hair. She said, "I cannot walk further." She suggests that she is tired from the enjoyment of love. Out of shyness she does not speak directly. Or she speaks out of pride. Kṛṣṇa said, "O charming girl! We must go to a pleasant spot far from the others." She said, "Take me, putting me on your shoulders as previously."

Text 30.38

evam uktaḥ priyām āha skandha āruhyatām iti
tataś cāntardadhe kṛṣṇaḥ sā vadhūr anvatapyata

Thus addressed, Kṛṣṇa replied, "Just climb on my shoulder." But as soon as he said this, he disappeared. His beloved consort then immediately felt constant remorse.

COMMENTARY: "Climb on my shoulders" is a joke since he addresses her as *priyām* (dear). *Skandha* can also mean body, chest, loins or the group of *gopīs*. Climb to the higher region where the other *gopīs* are situated. Or raise their anger.

After this or from that place or from her presence (*tataḥ*), he disappeared. The word *ca* means "but." The word *ca* means *tu*, indicating a different event. Or *ca* can indicate that he disappeared from everyone. His goal was previously stated. Kṛṣṇa was the form of the highest bliss. He disappeared to produce the highest bliss. And therefore he calls her dear (*priyām*).

puṣpa-bandhana-sammāna-kṛtamānām apāsya tām
nandagopa-suto yāto mārgeṇānena paśyata

See! Giving up binding her hair, he went by this path. See!

anuyāte 'samarthānyā nitamba-bhara-mantharā
yā gantavyo drutaṁ yāti nimna-pādāgra-saṁsthitiḥ

With her slow gait from heavy hips, she was unable to follow him. Quickly he went, showing the tips of his feet.

hasta-nyastāgra-hasteyaṁ tena yāti tathā sakhi
anāyatta-pada-nyāsā lakṣyate pada-paddhatī

With her hand in his, she went with him, O friend! You can see the irregular placement of the footprints.

hasta-samsparśa-mātreṇa dhūrteṇaiṣa vimānitā
nairāśyān mandagāminyā nivṛttaṁ lakṣyate padam

She became proud just by touching the cheater's hand. Losing taste, she then walked slowly. Her footprints stopped.

nūnam uktā tvarāmīti punar eṣyāmi te 'ntikam
tena kṛṣṇena yenaisā tvaritā pada-paddhatīḥ

He said "I will go quickly. I will come for you again." Thus you see his footprints go quickly. (*Viṣṇu Purana*)

She, being proud (*sāḥ*) or taking Kṛṣṇa as her life, then felt remorse. She continually lamented.

Text 30.39

hā nātha ramaṇa preṣṭha kvāsi kvāsi mahā-bhuja
dāsyās te kṛpaṇāyā me sakhe darśaya sannidhim

She cried out: O master! My lover! O dearest, where are you? Where are you? Please, O mighty-armed one, O friend, just show that you are nearby since I am just your servant, suffering intolerably!

COMMENTARY: She began to lament. *Ha* indicates distress or pain. The word should be added to all the names. O protector, since you are my husband (*nātha*)! Giver of happiness befitting a lover (*ramaṇa*)! Dearest (*preṣṭha*)! Giver of strong embraces (*mahābhuja*)! This is a sequence with later elements being the cause of the former.

Or O master (*nātha*)! Not only that, you give the happiness of love (*ramaṇa*) or cause various pastimes. By nature, you are dearer than the self (*preṣṭha*) because you are supremely attractive with a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*mahābhuja*). Or you produce the greatest enjoyment (*mahābhuja*), giving a wealth of enjoyment through love.

Or O lord of Vraja (*nātha*)! Being the lord, you are the enjoyer (*ramaṇa*) as the master. You are dearest (*preṣṭha*) as the illicit lover. This is perfected by your great beauty (*mahābhuja*). Or lamenting in grief, "Where are you? Where are you?" bewildered she falls on the ground. She desires to embrace him and remembers. "O strongarmed Kṛṣṇa!"

I am here, not far away. “Come close to me.” Why? I am your servant and most miserable. If I die, you will be in pain. O dearest (*sakhe*)! Or you should not cheat me as you did previously in revealing yourself. O friend whom I can trust (*sakhe*)!

Or “O dearest! Giving you up, I have not gone anywhere. I am beside you.” Being a fool, I do not see you. Reveal yourself to me since you are a friend. I am your servant.

Though in lamentation, consistency of meaning is not necessary and inconsistency is its quality, because intellect disappears in the pain of separation, the statements of such persons have all sorts of meanings. According to *bhakti*, the meanings have been explained. This applies for later explanations also.

She fainted and fell on the ground. This is inferred from verse 40. Or from verse 38 where it is stated he disappeared, she experienced *vaicittya*, and though he was actually present her ecstasy did not allow her to see him. Actually he was standing there silently for fun. She lamented in *vaicittya,* and when he saw the other *gopīs* approaching, he disappeared.

Text 30.40

śrī-śuka uvāca
anvicchantyo bhagavato mārgaṁ gopyo ’vidūritaḥ
dadṛśuḥ priya-viśleṣān mohitāṁ duḥkhitāṁ sakhīm

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While continuing to search out Kṛṣṇa’s path, the *gopīs* discovered their unhappy friend close by, suffering and fainting because of separation from her lover.

COMMENTARY: It was possible for her to be at a very great distance, but even then, she could be seen since she shone more powerfully than the full moon. Or they searched far in front. Or they saw her not far away (*avidūritaḥ*). Because of their own distraction, though close, they could not previously hear her painful cries. She suffered separation and then had fainted. She had fallen to the ground, had dust on her body, had wounds and blood on her limbs, and had profuse tears and saliva smearing her facial makeup. In that condition, all of them viewed her with affection.

They had imitated Kṛṣṇa's pastimes out of great pain in separation. She had fainted with a deathlike state. When the friends saw her in that condition, out of friendship they felt similar pain. In fact, they felt double the pain. Surrounding her, they all wept. Previous envy in all of them disappeared on its own. Later they made her revive consciousness gradually by their various skills. Comforting her, they asked what had happened.

Text 30.41

tayā kathitam ākarṇya māna-prāptiṁ ca mādhavāt
avamānaṁ ca daurātmyād vismayaṁ paramaṁ yayuḥ

She told them how Mādhava had given respect, but how she then suffered dishonor because of her pride. The gopīs were extremely amazed to hear this.

COMMENTARY: They heard everything that she related. Or though they did not ask, fearing she would again suffer, when the friends arrived, she spoke on her own describing everything (*kathitam*) in lamentation. Or they heard one statement from her, then they heard how she developed pride, then how she was dishonored. Or they heard what she said: how she became proud and was dishonored. Dishonor means he gave her up, because of her pride (*daurātmyāt*). The two words *ca* indicate that the pride and the giving her up were equally important.

She was given up by the consort of Lakṣmī (*mādhavāt*), who enjoys and suddenly disappears from the *rāsa* dance. Or *mādhava* means he who always plays with *madhura-rasa.* Someone else is more qualified than me. By the greatness of his mercy he is attained, not by one's qualities or by such pride. Auspiciousness should be explained to arise from the Lord's qualities like mercy and all inauspiciousness arises from one's faults. That is taught by the devotees.

Or *daurātmyāt* can mean "because of my being far from Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa being far from me, being inaccessible." They became completely astonished by his mercy and withdrawal of mercy.

Text 30.42

tato 'viśan vanaṁ candra jyotsnā yāvad vibhāvyate
tamaḥ praviṣṭam ālakṣya tato nivavṛtuḥ striyaḥ

In search of Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs then entered the depths of the forest as far as the light of the moon shone. But when they found themselves engulfed in darkness, they decided to turn back.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Supported by her *sakhīs* because of her completely agitated condition, she and the other *gopīs* again began searching for him. They went searching into the forest as far as the moon spread its light. Inferring from his footprints that Kṛṣṇa had gone deep into the dense forest, they then left the forest. This is described in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa:*

praviṣṭo gahanaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ padam atra na lakṣyate
nivartadhvaṁ śaśāṅkasya naitad dīdhiti-gocaraḥ

Kṛṣṇa has entered such a dark part of the forest that we cannot possibly see his footprints. Therefore let us turn back from this area, where even the light of the moon cannot reach.

They turned back because it was not possible for women (*striyaḥ*) to enter the dark forest. Since they were deeply fearful by nature, they speculated that he had entered the deep forest because of receiving ill treatment from them. They were eager to get out of that place since it was difficult to penetrate. Instead of *tataḥ* sometimes *hareḥ* (from Kṛṣṇa) is seen but this is not accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī. *Tataḥ* is found twice in the verse. The second *tataḥ* with *nivavṛtuḥ* means "they gave up searching for Kṛṣṇa" since it has no meaning in combination with the previous phrase. And *tataḥ* meaning "from Hari" is also unsuitable since the meaning would be "they gave up Kṛṣṇa."

Text 30.43

tan-manaskās tad-alāpās tad-viceṣṭās tad-ātmikāḥ
tad-guṇān eva gāyantyo nātmagārāṇi sasmaruḥ

Their minds absorbed in thoughts of him, they conversed about him, they engaged in actions of imitating him, and made efforts only for him. They

completely forgot about themselves and their homes as they sang about Kṛṣṇa's qualities.

COMMENTARY: "They should go home." They did not remember this statement at all. Their very selves, endowed with various types of happiness, were dedicated to him (*tad-ātmikāḥ*) or, though accustomed to doing household chores, their minds became dedicated to him. Or their bodies, or their houses or bodies and houses, became dedicated to him. The reason they forgot about enjoying with all its elements is given: their minds, words and bodies were absorbed in him (*tan-manaskāḥ tad-alāpāḥ tad-viceṣṭāḥ*). They absorbed their minds in remembering his qualities, or they remembered various vows to attain him. They conversed about his calling them or described his pastimes.

They used their bodies to imitate his pastimes and offering respects on the ground, stringing garlands and making beds. Thus they were completely absorbed in him (*tad-ātmikāḥ*).

Or they offered themselves to him as previously described.

They sang about his qualities, not about faults like cruelty in giving them up. The Lord was fond of songs.

nāhaṁ vasāmi vaikuṇṭhe na yogi-hṛdaye varau
mad bhaktā yatra gāyanti tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada.

I do not live in Vaikuṇṭha or in the excellent heart of the *yogī*. O Nārada! I reside were my devotees sing. (*Padma Purāṇa*)

This indicates that singing is the best means of bringing the Lord under control. Or having giving up searching for him, they sang out of the nature of pain in separation.

Since singing is listed at the end, using the present participle, it is considered the best, being the chief method of remembrance. Since they could not sing and converse at the same time, sometimes they talked and sometimes they sang.

Or the four terms mentioned in the first line were their constant nature. Thus, in pain of separation they sang. Though they were about to die (*tad-ātmikāḥ*), they prevented this by their actions. Or to prevent death, they identified with him and did these actions. Or the increase of pain in

separation causes absorption in him. Like his mind, their minds became devoid of fear. Like his speaking, their speaking became filled with jokes with play on words and deep, sweet syllables. Like his actions, their actions became filled with embraces and other gestures. Like his body (*ātma*), their bodies became attractive by imitating his three bends. They then sang songs about his qualities. This was their nature. By this, their eagerness to attain him increased rather than decreased.

Text 30.44

punaḥ pulinam āgatya kālindyāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ
samavetā jaguḥ kṛṣṇaṁ tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ

The gopīs again came to the bank of the Yamunā. Meditating on Kṛṣṇa and eagerly hoping he would come, they sat down together to sing of him.

COMMENTARY: Again they came to the bank. Having given us up here, perhaps he has come here to pacify us. Or in the absence of seeing him, they wanted to see the place where he had played with them. Thus it is said that they thought of Kṛṣṇa, who attracts the heart and gives the highest bliss (*kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ*). They gathered together there, thinking, "He has come here" or thinking of his pastimes there. They sang loudly, so that Kṛṣṇa would hear, or out of the nature of separation. *Na duḥkhaṁ pañcabhiḥ saha:* there is no suffering in the company of five people. (*Gopāla-campu* 24.84)

They sang about Kṛṣṇa, the form of the highest bliss. Their *prāṇas* did not leave their bodies because of their singing. They desired that he come. No other desire was there and this desire for him to come did not disappear. They desired only to see him, with great pain in separation. That is signified by the word *āgamana* (coming).

Thinking of him, they said, "Let us give up searching for him on these paths, since we are an obstacle to his appearing. This bank of the Yamunā is near and the sound will spread far without hindrance. Assembling together and going there, we will loudly sing plaintive songs and Kṛṣṇa will quickly come out of compassion." They again came to the bank of the Yamunā because they were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ*).

[1] They asked trees with the understanding that Kṛṣṇa was all-pervading, even in the trees.

Chapter Thirty-one
The Gopīs Songs of Separation (Gopī-gītā)

Text 31.1

gopya ūcuḥ
jayati te ’dhikaṁ janmanā vrajaḥ
śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi
dayita dṛśyatāṁ dikṣu tāvakās
tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvāṁ vicinvate

The gopīs said: O beloved, by your birth the land of Vraja has become exceedingly glorious, and thus Lakṣmī always resides here. Let our suffering be known to you. Offering ourselves to you, we search for you everywhere. We maintain our lives only in the hope of attaining you.

COMMENTARY: May the *gopīs* be pleased with my eagerness as I desire to explain the meaning of their words dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. To some extent, I accept the remnants of the nectar of the *gopīs’* song drunk by Śrīdhara Svāmī.

Vraja is more glorious than everything else or even Vaikuṇṭha (*adhika*). Vraja includes all their qualities because (*hi*) in Vraja (*atra*), Lakṣmī, increasing more and more, full of wealth, serves personally, at all times (*adhikam*), everything there without distinction.

Or the queen of Vaikuṇṭha lives there in a surrendered mood, or comes and goes, since she cannot stay there permanently. She goes there because it has more wealth than in Vaikuṇṭha or because Lakṣmī is directly seen going from house to house in a humble mood.

Hi can also mean certainly. Therefore it is said

tata ārabhya nandasya vrajaḥ sarva-samṛddhimān
harer nivāsātma-guṇai ramākrīḍam abhūn nṛpa

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the home of Nanda Mahārāja is eternally the abode of the Supreme Lord and his qualities, and is therefore always naturally endowed with all wealth. Yet beginning from Kṛṣṇa’s appearance there, it became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune. (SB 10.5.18)

Or though Kṛṣṇa was born in Mathurā, Vraja excelled its wealth. Or because they believed he was born in Vraja, they talk about his birth there. By that influence everyone there had all auspiciousness. Only we, stuck with misfortune, suffer at all times, exceedingly. That is not known by you, our dear life, most merciful and full of knowledge.

For now, let all else be. But something should be known. They pray. It should be known (*dṛśyatām*) or directly done. Seeing our suffering directly, being pained by our suffering, you should come. Being accepted by you (*tāvakāṇ*), or being your servants, we search everywhere (*dikṣu*), in great pain. Because of being yours, we suffer.

They do not directly say "we" or "the *gopīs*." They could not say this because of extreme humility caused by the defeat on being rejected. Or they spoke generally with a desire to announce their sorrow as his servants, in great pain. Or the statement becomes deeper by making a general statement. For the same reasons, they later say *apaśyatām* (verse 15).

"You are unintelligent. You should dedicate yourself to someone else." Only you are pleasing. No relationship with anyone else is pleasing. It is said, "*Prema* without deception does not exist among the men of this world. If it exists, there is separation, and in separation who can live?" In separation from the lover, the lover cannot live. Because of you, we do not die. We maintain our lives because of you. We maintain our lives with the hope of attaining you. Or placing ourselves in you, our *prāṇas* are not destroyed (*tvayi dhṛtāsavaḥ*).

All the verses in the chapter have similar syllables and lines, with the same second syllable in each line (*ya* in the first verse) or sometimes the first syllable and the seventh syllable is the same in a line. This is described in the *Muktāphala* commentary.

Text 31.2

śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat-
sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dṛśā
surata-nātha te 'śulka-dāsikā
vara-da nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ

O Lord of love, in beauty your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of benedictions, you are killing the maidservants who have given themselves to you freely, without any price. Will you not kill us?

COMMENTARY: *Śrī-muṣā* suggests that his eyes are the greatest thieves. There is a theft of great treasure equal to Lakṣmī, placed amidst the excellent objects of the devotees, at the best time, in the inaccessible water. For such theft, death is a proper punishment. Actually, this expresses the great beauty of his eyes. One eye only is mentioned out of agitation from intense *bhāva*. Or even one eye defeats the lotus.

We are unpaid, low class maidservants (*aśulka-dāsikāḥ*). *Surata-nātha* and *varada* indicate that he should not make them die. Then his reputation as the fulfiller of the devotees' desires in love (*surata)* and his previous state as the giver of benedictions (*varada*) would be destroyed. Since you are the lord of enjoyment in love, you made us desire you. By giving benedictions you confirmed this. Thus, there is no fault in our bold request.

Or "O wise one! By our death, you will be blamed." O lord of love by the eyes (*dṛśā surata-natha*)! By your eyes alone you give the happiness of enjoyment in love. Because of this killing (*nighnataḥ*), by not bestowing benedictions, it is a sin, murder (*vadhaḥ*).

Or by the price in the form of your eyes (stealing from us), we have paid the price. Or without price, the maidservants have been killed. Or by the pain of separation or by your rejection, their death happens by itself. They address him as lord of love and giver of blessings out of anger in love or intense pain of separation.

You cause pain (*nātha*) to those who are most attracted to you (*su-rata*). You destroy your benedictions (*varada*) or are the supreme destroyer. *Do* (in *vara-da*) means to destroy. Thus you should come to prevent faults in yourself.

Text 31.3

viṣa-jalāpyayād vyāla-rākṣasād
varṣa-mārutād vaidyutānalāt

vṛṣa-mayātmajād viśvato bhayād
ṛṣabha te vayaṁ rakṣitā muhuḥ

O greatest of personalities, you have repeatedly saved us from all kinds of danger—from poisoned water, from the terrible man-eater Agha, from the wind mixed with rains and the fiery thunderbolt of Indra, from Vatsāsura and from Vyomāsura.

COMMENTARY: By protecting the cows and cowherds from the poisonous water and by protecting all Vraja from the rain of Indra, you protected relatives and us. Or all this protection took place by the auspiciousness of Kṛṣṇa's presence. This is stated out of intense *prema*.

You protected us from Vyomāsura. Though this took place later, they state this out of *prema*, in pain of separation, manifesting spontaneous omniscience. Though it will take place in the future it is expressed in the past, to show the certainty of the event. We were saved from many types of sufferings. We cannot even count them. We were protected from Pūtanā, Śakaṭāsura, Tṛnāvarta, the Yamalārjuna trees, Baka, Vatsāsura, the forest fire, and Keśī. Again and again we were protected by you or things related to you. That is natural for you since you are the best in mercy (*ṛṣabha*) or since you are the lord of Vraja.

Here they mention themselves directly (*vayam*) in order to indicate to him to help them even now. Thus they say "You protected us constantly (*muhuḥ*). You were most merciful, without indifference."

Or they directly experienced these events as in a dream or hallucination, under the influence of *prema*. Thus the chronological order is missing, out of confusion in separation. Or the events are arranged in order of less fear for Kṛṣṇa, with a clear enumeration of the events. We were saved from the poisonous water, what to speak of from Aghāsura.

Or we were saved from the demon Kāliya and others demons, from Pūtanā, Baka and Agha, and from Śaṅkhacūḍa, a Yakṣa, non-different from the Rākṣasas mentioned (*vyāla-rākṣasād*). This is made clear in the story of Dhruva. The singular *rākṣasāt* is used to denote a species. You protected us from the storm of intoxicated Indra and from the wind of Tṛnavarta (*mārutāt*) and from the lightening at the time of the monsoon. You protected us from two forest fires and from other things like the cart

(*viśvataḥ*). We and the cowherds (*te*) were protected by you (understood by context).

By defeating Kāliya, you protected the cowherds from the poisonous water and you protected us when we wanted to enter the water and die in grief by your sweet glance. You protected Nanda from being swallowed by the snake. You protected all of Vraja from fear of Pūtanā falling on them. You protected the young boys from the cart demon and the *yamalārjuna* trees. You protected us from Śaṅkhacūḍa. You protected all of Vraja from the rain. These are stated as examples. We were protected by all these in general. Now however, you should protect us by coming.

Or the word *kim* is continued from the last verse. Were we protected from all these calamities? It would be better if they would kill us. The demons are listed with increasing tendency to kill them.

Text 31.4

na khalu gopīkā-nandano bhavān
akhila-dehinām antarātma-dṛk
vikhanasārthito viśva-guptaye
sakha udeyivān sātvatāṁ kule

You are not actually the son of the gopī Yaśodā, O friend, but rather the indwelling witness in the hearts of all embodied souls. Because Brahmā prayed for you to come and protect the universe, you have now appeared in the Sātvata dynasty.

COMMENTARY: You not only exist externally as the performer of various pastimes, but internally as well. Since you are the witness in all beings, you know our suffering. How much can we describe? "Yes I know, but everything should be done at the proper time." By appearing in the world among the devotees by the prayers of Brahmā, you must protect the devotees at any time. It is not proper to choose a favorable moment for us, your devotees. In this *avatāra* you depend on the devotees, and go beyond your own work. This is made clear when he rescues the son of his guru.

"You are not my devotees." Still, you should protect us, since Brahmā prayed that you should protect everyone during this *avatāra*. He prayed for the protection of the universe. Since you must fulfill the promise to your

great devotee Brahmā, you should not ignore us. Moreover, we should be especially protected because of our special *bhāva*. You are our friend (*sakhe*).

Or though you are the inner witness, are you not the giver of bliss to the *gopīs* (*gopikā-nandandaḥ*)? Yes, you are. You came when Brahmā prayed. Therefore you should give us bliss.

Or you are not Kṛṣṇa, who manifests his qualities as Bhagavān, with qualities like mercy, beautiful form and pastimes. You are Paramātmā. Taking the role of Vedāntists, they speak in great pain. You are certainly (*khalu*) not Kṛṣṇa. That is understood now. That is understood in the rest of the statements in the verse. Or in spite of the prayer of Brahmā, you do not protect the universe, but destroy it (*aviśva-guptaye*). You were born in the family of Yadus, not the cowherds.

Or O friend! This is uttered with sarcasm. The *na* at the beginning of the verse is supplied for all the statements. Are you really a friend? You are not the son of Yaśodā. If you were, you would not ignore us, after showing you are controlled by your devotee in the Dāmodara pastime.

Or if you were the person who gives joy to all the women of Vraja (*gopikā-nandandaḥ*), you could not treat us in this manner. You are not the inner witness of all beings. If you were, you would know about our suffering. Brahmā did not pray that you protect the world. If he did, then we would be qualified for your protection. You did not appear in the Yadu family. If you did, you would have unlimited mercy to persons related to them.

Or you were requested to appear in the family of devotees (*sātvatām*) by Brahmā to protect the world since you are the witness in all beings. You (*sa*) appeared as *ākāsa* (*khe*), being neutral. Thus you are not the one who gives joy to the *gopīs* (*gopikā-nandanaḥ*).

Or *u* means O *gopikā-nandanda*! *Vikhana* means Kṛṣṇa's grandfather. By your grandfather, you were requested to protect all the people of Vraja (*viśva-guptaye*). You appeared in the family of cowherd devotees (*sātvatām kule*). What to speak of protecting us, you do not even know the suffering in our hearts. You are not the knower of what is in our hearts. You should destroy the great pain in our burning hearts. It is well known that his grandfather worshipped Viṣṇu for having the best son.

Text 31.5

viracitābhayaṁ vṛṣṇi-dhūrya te
caraṇam īyuṣāṁ saṁsṛter bhayāt
kara-saroruhaṁ kānta kāma-daṁ
śirasi dhehi naḥ śrī-kara-graham

O best of the Vṛṣṇis, your lotus-like hand, which holds the hand of the goddess of fortune, grants fearlessness to those who approach your feet out of fear of material existence. O lover, please place that wish-fulfilling lotus hand on our heads.

COMMENTARY: As in the previous verse, they imagine his powers as the Lord. Your hand grants liberation (*viracitābhayam*). Your hand gives what people desire such as *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* and also *bhakti* (*kāma-dam*). Your hand accepts to be controlled by the devotees because of their *prema*. It grants *rasa* because of *prema* (*śrīkara-graham*). The sequence is in order of ascending excellence. That hand is like a lotus because by its nature it gives coolness and sweetness. Liberation here means freedom from various sufferings with the increase of a wealth of unobstructed *prema*. *Artha*, *dharma* and *kāma* are only accepted in their aspects which are suitable for attaining *prema*. Otherwise, the devotees reject them. The whole description arises from the enthusiasm of *prema*.

"But you are not qualified for *prema*." That is true. Because of your greatness, please place that hand on our heads. You can control Indra (*vṛṣṇi-dhūrya*). Thus you should favor your devotees. O Kṛṣṇa who appeared in the Yadu dynasty to display unlimited mercy! The cowherds are also Yadus. You should do this because of your special *bhāva*. O beloved (*priya*)!

Or there is a comparison with a lotus. The lotus, by destroying suffering, by its coolness, bestows all desires—there is the destruction of suffering and bestowal of bliss (*kāmadam*).

The highest result is also spontaneously produced. The hand gives freedom from fear of *saṁsāra* for those who are surrendered. Therefore destroy our fear of again being separated from you. O lover! Your hand bestows all

desires (*kāma-dam*). It is all things and bestows all things. *Kānta* (lover), the best expression of Kṛṣṇa with the best quality, is placed before *kāma-dam*, though it should be placed last in the list of qualities. The reason it is placed before *kāma-dam* is to emphasize the conclusion, as explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta*, or it expresses the present desire of the *gopīs*: attaining him as the lover will be the fulfilment of their desires. It is possible for you to hold the hand of Lakṣmī. Thus it is possible you will do this for us.

Or put the hand held by Lakṣmī on our heads because you should bestow mercy to the Yadus (*vṛṣṇi-dhūrya*). This desire is later expressed by Akrura

apy aṅghri-mūle patitasya me vibhuḥ
śirasy adhāsyan nija-hasta-paṅkajam
dattābhayaṁ kāla-bhujāṅga-raṁhasā
prodvejitānāṁ śaraṇaiṣiṇāṁ ṇṛnām

And when I have fallen at his feet, my master will place his lotus hand upon my head—a hand which destroys fear in all people who are greatly disturbed by the powerful serpent of time and who desire shelter. (SB 10.38.16)

And you are our lover (*kānta*). You can do this since you fulfill all desires (*kāmadam*).

Or place on our heads your hand which has the marks of conch and *cakra* (*śrīkara-graham*), which destroys fear by destroying enemies, for persons surrendered (*īyuṣām*) to your feet because of fleeing out of their fear of enemies (*saṁsṛter bhayāt*). This interpretation avoids the majestic aspect (of Lakṣmī). You have appeared in the Yadu dynasty particularly to reveal your unlimited sweetness (*vṛṣṇi-dhūrya*). You should give your hand because of your love for us (*kānta*).

Or his hand giving relief from fear indicates his courage in removing the fear of *saṁsāra*. *Kānta* indicates that he bestows all desires. You bestow all desires and bestow happiness (*śrīkara-graham*) since you hold the hand of Lakṣmī, controller of all wealth, because you control her in Gokula. Since you can bestow all wealth, you can fulfill our desire in the form of destroying our fear of separation. Attaining you, all other things are also attained. You are the outstanding member in Vraja, a part of the Vṛṣṇi

dynasty. You should thus protect us and not ignore us. Thus, place your hand on our heads for these two reasons. Accept us as yours.

Text 31.6

vraja-janārti-han vīra yoṣitāṁ
nija-jana-smaya-dhvaṁsana-smita
bhaja sakhe bhavat-kiṅkarīḥ sma no
jalaruhānanaṁ cāru darśaya

Show us your beautiful lotus face since you destroy the suffering of Vraja's people. O hero of all women, your smile shatters the false pride of your devotees. Please, dear friend, accept us as your maidservants.

COMMENTARY: You should not only place your hand on our heads but fulfill our desire. What was previously stated, they express with great longing. By this, they show he is qualified for worship.

If you do not accept us, by dying we will stop the pain. O hero (*vīra*)! You are capable of giving even what should not be given. You destroy pride just by your smile. Why do you have to disappear to destroy our pride? Or his great attractiveness is indicated. Therefore we must see him.

O friend! This indicates a special type of response. Or you should grieve after seeing our unfortunate state when you do not respond to us, since friends experience each other's suffering. Or if you do not respond, you will be at fault for destroying trust as a friend.

"I do not care for all this." They then speak in misery. We are your servants. It is most unsuitable to ignore those who have surrendered to you. Or "Follow Balarāma." We are your servants, not anyone else's. Show with love (*cāru*) or with a close view your lotus face, with its glance, a movement of the brow and smile. Just by seeing your face which is like a lotus, it removes the pain caused by separation. You must show mercy because we are women (*yoṣitām*) with no ability. Or if you do not show your face, those who take you as their life will die. Or women by the happiness of seeing you become fully devoted to you. Therefore you should show your face to them.

Or among women, you should accept those who are your own as your wives. Your smile destroys our pride. Therefore accept them as your

servants. The method is explained. Show your lotus face. This method continues until the end of verse 8.

Or O hero of women (*vīra yoṣitām*)! You are capable of killing women. We are about to die. Respond to those who are not your servants (*abhavat-kiṅkarīḥ*). Show us your beautiful lotus face since our death is certain. This is uttered in great pain and anger.

Text 31.7

praṇata-dehināṁ pāpa-karṣaṇaṁ
tṛṇa-carānugaṁ śrī-niketanam
phaṇi-phaṇārpitaṁ te padāmbujaṁ
kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ kṛndhi hṛc-chayam

Your lotus feet destroy the past sins of all embodied souls who surrender to them. Those feet follow the cows in the pastures and are the eternal abode of the goddess of fortune. Since you once put those feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kāliya, please place them upon our breasts and destroy the desire in our hearts.

COMMENTARY: Place your extraordinary lotus feet (*te*) on the breasts of us, your surrendered servants (*te*). Those feet destroy the misery of *saṁsāra* (*pāpam*) or the strongest desires. They follow the cows in the pasture. This shows mercy in caring for the animals of Vraja. The four descriptive terms show the destruction of sin.

“Do you desire my foot on your breast for this purpose?” No. Our goal is destruction of the desires in our hearts. Our desires are unlimited and your foot is suitable, wandering everywhere. This is for us and for you. The comparison with the lotus indicates that the foot produces all results and is the highest goal.

Or “O fearless women! I am afraid of sin.” Your foot destroys the sins of all beings, of those who have offered respects even once, who have somehow surrendered to you. Why should you be afraid of sin?

Or “I cannot act like this with you who are filled with sin.” You should destroy our sins, since we have surrendered to you.

sakṛd eva prapanno yas tavāsmīti ca yācayet
abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai dadamy etad vrataṁ mama

To the person who surrenders even once to me saying "I am yours" I deliver him from fear. That is my vow. (*Rāmāyaṇa*)

"I should not apply that tender foot to cruel persons, since the foot will suffer." Your feet do not suffer in wandering from forest to forest herding the cows. We, like the ignorant cows, should receive your mercy.

"Is it suitable to place my feet on your beautiful breasts?" Your feet are the abode of Lakṣmī. Since your feet are full of all wealth, our breasts will be the best ornaments.

"Since I am fearful by nature, I am afraid of your husbands." You placed your feet on the hoods of Kāliya. Or you destroyed the poison by putting your feet on his head. In the same way destroy the poison of the desire in our hearts by placing your feet there. Previously they requested that he place his hand on their heads (singular used to show the unity of all of them). This would not give rise to rivalry. Now they request he put his feet on their breasts (plural), individually. Thus he should also place his hands on each of their heads. Because this gives rise to rivalry, for special *rasa*, he should do this simultaneously to all individually, so that no distinctions are indicated. It will be the remedy for the malady which is unseen, being in the heart.

Text 31.8

madhurayā girā valgu-vākyayā
budha-manojñayā puṣkarekṣaṇa
vidhi-karīr imā vīra muhyatīr
adhara-sīdhunāpyāyayasva naḥ

O lotus-eyed one, by your sweet voice and charming words, which attract the minds of the intelligent, we have fainted. Our dear hero, please revive your maidservants with the nectar of your lips.

COMMENTARY: Revive us with the nectar of your lips, otherwise we will die. We faint because of your words which we now remember. "There is no one dearer than you women." Fainting accompanies death. We faint without the nectar of your lips. The remedy is the nectar. By attaining that, we are

cured. Nothing else will cure us. That is quite suitable. We follow your order (*vidhi-karīḥ*).

The cause of fainting from the words is described. The words are sweet like nectar. Or they give intoxication (*madhum rāti –madhu rayā*). “Why?” The words are attractive by meaning and sound. They attract the minds of women (*vadhu-manojñayā*). The words are attractive to the mind and ears.

In a fainting state, they address themselves as *imā* (those persons), to indicate that they are present at that time for certain, visible to the eyes. “How can you faint just by words?” You are endowed with great abilities (*vīra*). Your words are similar.

“How can I give something that cannot be given?” O *vīra* you are most merciful (*dayā-vīra*) or generous (*dāna-vīra*). In speaking, he also had a beautiful, playful glance (*puṣkarekṣaṇa*), which increased the attraction of the words.

paryācitāmṛta-rasāni padārtha-bhaṅgī-
valgūni valgita-viśāla-vilocanāni
bālyādhikāni mada-ballava-bhāvinībhir
bhāve luṭhanti sukṛtāṁ tava jalpitāni

Your conversations with the impassioned wives of the cowherds, which are attractive with skillful verses and word play, which cause rasas completely filled with nectar, which cause the wide eyes of the gopīs to quiver, and which increase constantly because of the playfulness of youth, tremble within the love-laden hearts of the pious women. (Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta)

Or, since we are bewildered by your words, we have become your servants (vidhi-karīḥ).

All our discrimination has disappeared because of bewilderment. Or, because of your words, we have become your servants. But because of the pain of separation, we have fainted. Unskillful women are attracted by your words (avadhu), what to speak of the skillful women.

Or if women who are knowledgeable are attracted to your words, what can be said of devotees? Or if learned women are attracted, what to speak of ignorant women like us?

Or by words which are just pleasing to hear, but which are actually beautiful words, attractive only to unskillful women, these gopīs (imāḥ) whose judgement has been lost because of love, become your servants and faint for you, for the nectar of your lips. Do not make us recover, but let us die. That is proper for us, who have no sense of judgment. This statement is made out of intense pain in prema.

Text 31.9

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanaṁ
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ

The nectar of your topics is the life of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, praised by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are most excellent and are broadcast all over the world. Those who speak these topics are the greatest benefactors.

COMMENTARY: The nectar of your topics gives life to persons suffering pain from separation. There is no effort required for hearing them. Those topics are described with praise by ancient and contemporary poets. Hearing the meaning while being lusty or angry or having sin still gives effect: those topics destroy all sin. The meaning manifests by its own power (not through qualification). There is no dependence even on understanding the meaning. Hearing itself is auspicious.

Or not only do the topics destroy all misery immediately for the suffering *jīvas*, but are praised by the poets for bestowing all things. "How is that?" It destroys *saṁsāra* (*kalmaṣāpaham*) or it destroys all suffering, since *saṁsāra* is the root of all difficulties. Moreover, it brings all auspiciousness (*śravaṇa-maṅgalam*). Thus it accomplishes everything. By its nature it bestows the highest result. It spreads wealth everywhere (*śrīmad-ātatam*).

Or the order of effects is with increasing excellence. The topics, like the nectar, destroy hunger, thirst and sickness, produce strength and nourishment and as the goal, produce sweet taste (*śrīmad-ātatam*). That is widespread or all pervading. However, nectar does not spread everywhere,

since it is for the enjoyment of the *devatās.* Or since persons from whom to hear are unavailable and we cannot hear because of no control, due to the pain of separation, we have died.

Or "O women in pain! Until you recover, pass your time in speaking about me amongst yourselves." They speak in terror. Your topics are the cause of death (*kathā mṛtam*). Cause and effect are considered non-different. Thus, being dead (*mṛtam*) and the cause of dying are the same. "Why?" From hearing those topics, we live in pain (*tapta-jīvanam*). Thus, those who hear those topics destroy themselves (*bhūridāḥ*). *Do* (in *bhūri-dāḥ*)means destruction. The topics are a great destroyer of *prāṇa*. This is a statement uttered out of great pain in *prema*.

"Why are these topics related in the *Purāṇas*?" The topics have been described by poets. Since the poets by nature describe everything, they have described these topics. They destroy sin and produce happiness, though not the ultimate happiness.

Or the topics are described by the poets because they destroy sin and create happiness. The poets praise the topics for destroying sin and giving pleasure to the ears. Thus the topics are spread by the poets to kings who are intoxicated with wealth. Or the topics are spread by persons intoxicated with wealth by songs and dance. Those who live for a moment with a hope of attaining you are hopeless.

Text 31.10

prahasitaṁ priya-prema-vīkṣaṇaṁ
viharaṇaṁ ca te dhyāna-maṅgalam
rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdi spṛśaḥ
kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi

Your excellent smiles, your sweet, loving glances, your pastimes worthy of meditation and confidential talks we enjoyed with you, which touch our hearts, give grief to our minds. O cheater!

COMMENTARY: "Unintelligent women! By force, hear my topics, as a medicine." Or we cannot maintain our lives by hope alone. This verse describes this. Your (*te*) pure smiles (*prahasitam*), your glances with *prema*

and your play, which produce happiness simply by thinking of them, disturb our minds.

Or these elements easily produce meditation in *prema*.

dhyānāyanaṁ prahasitaṁ bahulādharoṣṭha-
bhāsāruṇāyita-tanu-dvija-kunda-paṅkti

One should meditate upon the Lord's laughter, an easy object of meditation, which shows his teeth like a row of jasmine buds with his shining, full, red lips. (SB 3.28.33)

These elements please the heart. Or the conversations, just on entering the ears, touch the heart with disturbance. All these elements agitate us with desire (*kṣobhayanti*). *Sāṁvidaḥ* by proximity can modify *hṛdi spṛśaḥ. Hṛdi spṛśaḥ,* being at the end, can be connected to the whole list of elements.

The smile and glance are mental attractions, arising from his pure *bhāva*, his mental state in *prema*. The play is a bodily attraction. The conversations are verbal attractions. The later ones are effective in creating a disturbance.

Hi indicates certainty. The cause of the disturbance is given. O beloved (*priya*)! If we did not love you, the disturbance would not take place. Because we love you alone, we are always filled with sorrow and mental disturbance. You cheat us. O cheater (*kuhaka*)!

Or just on seeing the beloved, we become joyful (*prahasitam*). We look at him with smiles of *prema*. Thinking of him produces auspiciousness. These are the causes of our hope. There were conversations. "I will fulfill all the promises. Certainly your desires will be fulfilled." By now ignoring us, doing the opposite of your words, we must conclude that you are a cheater. O cheater (*kuhaka*)!

Or "Women and especially chaste women should have composure." They speak in misery. Your smile, glance, play and conversations throw us into confusion. They break our composure. That we still live, with this remembrance, is because of our supreme composure and determination.

Text 31.11

calasi yad vrajāc cārayan paśūn
nalina-sundaraṁ nātha te padam
śila-tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ
kalilatāṁ manaḥ kānta gacchati

Dear master, dear lover, when you leave the cowherd village to herd the cows, our minds are disturbed with the thought that your feet, more beautiful than a lotus, will be pricked by the spiked husks of grain and the rough grass and plants.

COMMENTARY: You give us pain both in meeting and in separation. It is not a temporary phenomenon. This is explained in two verses (11-12). Our minds are disturbed from the time you begin to depart from Vraja till the time you return. To herd the unlimited number of cows, you leave the path and feel pain because of sharp plants when you wander here and there. The cows, beings with no intelligence, wander on paths difficult for your lotus feet. *Śila* refers to the sharp stubs of wild grasses. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *ajhilli-kaṇṭaka-vanam*: the thick forest was filled with thorns. Because thorns were not there everywhere, they are not mentioned in *Bhāgavatam*. O lord of Vraja! This is not befitting you. O beloved! Those feet should be touched by our soft hands! They call out to Kṛṣṇa in *prema*. This is the cause of the pain in their hearts. Or, as the master (*nātha*) of all the people of Vraja, all the people of Vraja feel pain, and as our lover (*kānta*), we feel pain. Or, *nātha* can mean "giver of pain to your beloveds." "You are intelligent. You should not worry about my situation." Even if one is intelligent, one cannot give up worry for one's lover (*kānta*). Or, the cause of being troubled in mind is explained: you are the lord of the *prāṇas* (*nātha*). (Therefore if you suffer, everyone suffers.)

Viṣṇu Purāṇa says

yāvataḥ kurute jantuḥ sambandhān manasaḥ priyān
tāvanto'sya nikhanyante hṛdaye śoka-śaṅkavaḥ

As long as living beings think of another person as a beloved, they will be afflicted by lamentation. Having a lover will produce problems. One should thus reject affection.

Our minds have become fixed in determination (*kalilatām*) and have no discriminating power. "Consider that this is only your minds acting like

this." There is no fault in the mind. O Kṛṣṇa, attractive to the mind (*kānta*)! Give up wandering in the forest and quickly come here.

Text 31.12

dina-parikṣaye nīla-kuntalair
vanaruhānanaṁ bibhrad āvṛtam
dhana-rajasvalaṁ darśayan muhur
manasi naḥ smaraṁ vīra yacchasi

At the end of the day you repeatedly show us your lotus face, covered with dark blue locks of hair and thickly powdered with dust. Thus, O hero, you arouse desires in our minds.

COMMENTARY: We spend the whole day suffering. Even when you return to Vraja in the evening, being unfortunate, we do not attain happiness. At the very end of the day, which has given us pain by long waiting, your lotus face is covered by black locks of hair, hanging over your forehead, producing great beauty. This suggests the greatest natural beauty. That face is covered with dust from the cows (*dhana-rajasvalam*). That is explained later by Akrūra.

drakṣyāmi nūnaṁ su-kapola-nāsikaṁ
smitāvalokāruṇa-kañja-locanam
mukhaṁ mukundasya guḍālakāvṛtaṁ
pradakṣiṇaṁ me pracaranti vai mṛgāḥ

Surely I shall see the face of Kṛṣṇa whose smile is like jasmine buds, since the deer are now walking past me on my right. That face, framed by his curly hair, is beautified by his attractive cheeks and nose, his smiling glances and his reddish lotus eyes. (SB 10.38.9)

This indicates the great beauty of his face. It is a cause of developing love constantly. The evening is also the time of increasing desire, and seeing his face covered by locks indicates the height of beauty. You show us your face in this condition. If you do not show it and enter your house, our desires would not be aroused. On the pretext of gathering the cows, we see your face constantly. This simply increases the desire more.

Bibhrad can also mean "holding the flute." The word flute is missing because they cannot utter the word directly, out of confusion in *prema*. Or

he held the flute (*dhana*) as well as the dust (*rajasvalam*). By seeing you dressed in this way in Vraja, we developed love. Now, in the forest at night, with the dress of a lover for engaging in pastimes of love, that love increases with particular remembrance in separation. Do not delay in coming.

Text 31.13

praṇata-kāma-daṁ padmajārcitaṁ
dharaṇi-maṇḍanaṁ dhyeyam āpadi
caraṇa-paṅkajaṁ śantamaṁ ca te
ramaṇa naḥ staneṣv arpayādhi-han

Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by Brahmā, fulfill the desires of all who bow down to them. They are the ornament of the earth, in times of danger they are the appropriate object of meditation and they give the highest satisfaction. O destroyer of anxiety! O bestower of joy! Please put those lotus feet upon our breasts.

COMMENTARY: Because of the agitation of love produced by the singing, they again pray with intensity in two verses (13-14), with more specific descriptions, though they had prayed previously.

Those feet bestow what the surrendered desire. They give everything. Therefore they are worshipped by Brahmā. This indicates their supreme power. They decorate the earth with marks of flag, etc., which stimulate *prema*. This indicates their beauty and compassion. They destroy all dangers, all obstacles to *bhakti* (*dhyeyam āpadi*). This strengthens the quality of stimulating *bhakti*. The lotus feet suggest that they bestow everything as was previously explained. They give the highest result in destroying suffering and bestowing love (*śantamam*). And according to this, they address Kṛṣṇa. O destroyer of our pain of separation (*ādhi-han*)! O bestower of happiness by your pastimes (*ramaṇa*)! Please give those feet.

Or those feet fulfill the desires of devotees like Brahmā. They are worshipped by Lakṣmī (*padmajā*). They are a treasure of auspiciousness. Those feet decorate the earth, a second form of Lakṣmī, by placing your feet there for pastimes. Or the feet are decorated with the *kuṅkuma* from

the breast of the earth. This indicates that the beloved controls him and that he gives pleasure to the beloved. The earth is dearer than Lakṣmī to Kṛṣṇa. That is mentioned in *Varāha Purāṇa*.

The feet are the subject of meditation during danger. Thus they deliver us from the pain of separation. They give the highest happiness; they are happiness itself (*śantamam*). In either interpretation the sequence of descriptions is in order of increasing excellence. Place those feet on the breasts of us (*naḥ*) who are yours (*te*) since you are inclined to *rati* (*ramaṇa*). If you do not, your fame as the destroyer of suffering (*arti-han*) will be at fault. This is described later in the fulfilment of Akrūra's desire.

Those who are surrendered worship those feet. Brahmā is an example. The sages meditate on those feet. The feet decorate the earth for the Sātvatas and cowherds. They produce *prema* (*śantamam*) for the *gopīs*. The bestowal of desires is superior to the destruction of sin mentioned previously. That is the prayer in both interpretations, but with more misery than the previous prayer for his feet (verse 7). Now however the feet become the sole object for getting relief, with the expectation of happiness, from a mind absorbed in those feet. Previously the goal was directly mentioned to be destroying the desire in the heart. Now however that is indirectly hinted with *ādhi-han* (O destroyer of pain). The excellence of the indirect method is explained

vedā brahmātma-viṣayās tri-kāṇḍa-viṣayā ime
parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam

The Vedas, divided into three divisions, ultimately reveal worship of the Lord. The Vedic sages and *mantras*, however, state this indirectly, since they know that I prefer this indirect method. (SB 11.21.35)

That pain was also expressed as an affliction but now, because of the unlimited pain, they seek its destruction.

Text 31.14

surata-vardhanaṁ śoka-nāśanaṁ
svarita-veṇunā suṣṭhu cumbitam
itara-rāga-vismāraṇaṁ nṛṇāṁ
vitara vīra nas te 'dharāmṛtam

O hero! Kindly distribute to us the nectar of your lips, which enhances conjugal pleasure and vanquishes grief. That nectar is thoroughly relished by your vibrating flute and makes people forget any other attachment.

COMMENTARY: The nectar of your lips increases *prema* (*su* + *rata* or *rati*) or happiness of enjoyment in love. Though we could constantly attain it, still it would be unsatisfying. Thus the word "increase" is used. This also avoids blaming the *gopīs* for boldness. It destroys lamentation caused by separation and unfulfilled desires. Without that nectar, lamentation will not cease.

The sound of the flute has a special quality to intoxicate. The cause of this effect is its direct contact with his lips. By that sound, all suffering is destroyed. There is no other way. Or showing the great fortune of the flute previously mentioned, the flute, kissing nectar, indicates the nectar's great sweetness and ability to give good fortune. Since the nectar is kissed by the flute, the nectar is not the agent of enjoyment, and does not decrease. That nectar makes men forget all other happiness such as liberation. It is most attractive. Since it is superior to liberation, it is superior to the nectar of the *devatās.* It is superior to hearing and other processes of *bhakti*. It is superior to seeing the Lord, since it is obtained only by dedicated women lovers. The list of descriptive terms is in order of cause, the last being the final cause.

"There is not much nectar." In response they say, "O person dedicated to giving (*vīra*)!" Or hero in the battle of love (*vīra*)! It is suitable that you give this nectar. Or *vīra* is an address to a person who has reached *kaiśora* age and suggests his ability to give *rasa*. The meaning can be taken according to the context.

Svarita can also refer to the flute playing notes (*svara*). If the nectar makes men forget other attractions, what to speak of women forgetting? Men attain the nectar of his lips by attaining some of his chewed betel-nut.

Or *nṛṇām vīra* (O hero among men)! By attaining that nectar, attraction to other things ceases. This suggests that by attaining Kṛṣṇa, they no longer have to search. Thus there is urgency in their request. Or the nectar of his lips makes them forget everything else by producing *rasa* for him (*itara-rāga-vismāraṇam*). By suggesting that this is the nature of the nectar, the

accusation of boldness to attain him can be denied. This request is clearly more specific than previously. Previously *sīdhu* was mentioned (verse 8). Now it is called *amṛta*.

Text 31.15

aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanaṁ
truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām
kuṭila-kuntalaṁ śrī-mukhaṁ ca te
jaḍa udīkṣatāṁ pakṣma-kṛd dṛśām

When you go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see you. And even when we can eagerly look upon your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, we think the creator was foolish in making eyelids.

COMMENTARY: Since it is impossible to tolerate the time of suffering, a moment feels like a *yuga*. Not seeing you for a long time is intolerable. Therefore quickly reveal yourself. All the people of Vraja cannot see you when you go to the forest, what to speak of us. And when we do see your beautiful face, with curling locks of hair, we, what to speak of others, do so with eyes having eyelids. Thus even seeing you is faulty.

Or, O Kṛṣṇa with inscrutable nature! We derive no pleasure from you at all. Seeing or not seeing you we suffer. Then they speak this verse. First they show that not seeing him produces suffering and then they show that seeing him produces suffering. Brahmā is ignorant since he did not make eyes that do not blink. He should be cursed. Or, he who can cut off (*kṛt*) eyelashes of people who see is very learned (*ajaḍa*). Or, he who cuts eyelids off his eyes (*sudṛśām*) is wise and can see nicely (*udīkṣatām*). We however, with eyelids covering our eyes, are foolish. What can we see directly?

Text 31.16

pati-sutānvaya-bhrātṛ-bāndhavān
ativilaṅghya te ’nty acyutāgatāḥ

gati-vidas tavodgīta-mohitāḥ
kitava yoṣitaḥ kas tyajen niśi

Who but a cheater like you would abandon young women who come to see you in the middle of the night, enchanted by the loud song of your flute, though you know the nature of your flute, and though we have completely rejected our husbands, children, mothers, fathers, and brothers to come to you, O Acyuta!

COMMENTARY: In spite of all this, what you have done today is most improper. We have ignored the instructions of our mothers and fathers (*bāndhavān*), brothers, sons and husbands, at the very root (*vi*), by ignoring all dharma and giving up affection for them (*ati*). We came because you never waver from being attracted to your devotees (*acyuta*). Moreover, you know your nature and ours (*gati-vidaḥ*). Or we know that you know that we are solely dedicated to you, and you know your qualities like fulfilling your promises. Or we know your qualities like compassion.

We were bewildered by your song. O cheater who deviates from his nature! It is improper to give up women frightened in the night. O cheater, who would give up such women? It is not possible even for a cheater to give up women in the night. You are not only crooked but also ungrateful.

Or you are a cheater because you have given up women first attracted by the song for pleasure, standing alone in the night.

Or O cheating women! Or women belonging to you, the cheater. We are cheaters like you and we know everything about your cheating. Give up trying to cheat us. Your cheating is clear. Now show yourself. Please show yourself.

Text 31.17

rahasi saṁvidaṁ hṛc-chayodayaṁ
prahasitānanaṁ prema-vīkṣaṇam
bṛhad-uraḥ śriyo vīkṣya dhāma te
muhur ati-spṛhā muhyate manaḥ

Our minds filled with desire are repeatedly bewildered on seeing the arousal of your desire through the intimate conversations we had with

you in secret, on seeing the remarkable smile on your face, your loving glances and your broad chest, the resting place of the goddess of fortune.

COMMENTARY: Knowing what you have done, do not delay in revealing yourself. They give more details than previously. Conversations were previously mentioned. By just one conversation in private, what to speak of many, our desire which was as if dormant and inactive, manifested. The smile and other elements are described in detail. Or the conversation manifests your desire or various transformations of desire.

Your face showed a remarkable smile spread over the cheeks and lips, endowed with special emotions. Or you have a remarkable smile on your face. Your glance was filled with love.

Your chest was broad, suitable for embraces. It was most beautiful. It was the abode of Lakṣmī. This shows its special beauty and the competition.

Thinking (*vīkṣya*) of all that, the minds of those present become bewildered. Or we see your smile, having great desire, and our minds become bewildered. *Ati-spṛhām* is Citsukha's version. Our minds became bewildered with a great desire for experiencing you in these ways or for associating with you intimately. This desire shows the strength of the desire in bewildering the mind. Or this expressed their complete lack of control.

Or in a private conversation, you smiled, or revealed your desire. Having seen those things, now on remembering what was seen, our desire has become intense. Or everything happened in that manner previously, but now, it takes on more intensity, bringing about our death.

Mentioning the abode of Lakṣmī can also indicate a fault, since he admits a competitor. Or it indicates his rarity, and thus their own miserable position. Or he is the abode of beauty, with his form, clothing and pastimes, to which nothing can compare. *Dhāma* can mean a creeper or a house. Not only do we develop extreme desires, but the mind faints because of the great sweetness. The mind cannot prevent this. This indicates the *gopīs'* extreme misery.

Or "I am grateful. Still, why are you so pained?" We are in pain because of the various ways in which you bewilder us. You are the only cause. They describe with pain the bewildering nature of his conversations, smile, etc.

Te (they, others) is the subject. Others, seeing your smile, develop extreme desire, and their minds become bewildered. Thus it is proper that we develop great desire and become bewildered also. Show yourself so that we do not die. This will be a show of your gratitude.

Text 31.18

vraja-vanaukasāṁ vyaktir aṅga te
vṛjina-hantry alaṁ viśva-maṅgalam
tyaja manāk ca nas tvat-spṛhātmanāṁ
sva-jana-hṛd-rujāṁ yan niṣūdanam

O beloved, you appear to destroy completely the distress of those living in Vraja and the forests and to bestow upon them all happiness to the highest degree. With minds longing for your association, please give to us just a bit of that medicine, which counteracts the disease in your devotees' hearts.

COMMENTARY: Now at least show yourself. This will certainly bring about all good results. Your *avatāra* or appearance (*vyaktiḥ*) destroys obstacles for those living in Vraja. But we are no longer living there. Therefore, disappearing from us is not proper. *Aṅga* is an address uttered in *prema*. Not only do you destroy obstacles for the people of Vraja, but you also show auspicious forms to the whole universe to the highest degree (*alam*). The obstacles do not reappear and the auspiciousness is a wealth of *bhakti* and *prema* along with happiness at every moment. Give a little of that which constantly destroys the pain in the hearts of your devotees. You know their pain and their desire for you since they are your devotees. The disease of the heart means the heart is filled with the pain of *prema*.

"I know that my devotees desire *prema* for me and Vaikuṇṭha, in order to see me." Our minds desire to attain you (*tvat-spṛhātmanām*) or our minds want enjoyment with you. Do something for us so that this can be fulfilled.

Manāg (a little) indicates that it is rare, or the humility of a request. However, *hṛd-rujām* (pains in the heart) in the plural and the word *niṣūdanam* (complete destruction) indicate that their love for him cannot be extinguished. It continually increases with freshness. It has various types of *prema*.

Or O friend (*sva-jana*)! Give a little of that which will extinguish the pain in the hearts of us who desire only you.

Text 31.19

yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu
tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit
kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyuṣāṁ naḥ

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in you. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as you roam about on the forest path.

COMMENTARY: Till now they have made their request, expressing their desire in many ways. In conclusion, thinking of the Lord wandering in the forest, imagining the pain to his lotus feet, they lose interest in their request, and pray for his happiness while crying, showing intense *prema*.

Your feet are soft like lotuses, but even softer (*sujāta*). Thus, gently we would like to place them on our breasts in fear, because our breasts are too hard. We want to do this because you are dear (*priya*) to us. It is suitable to hold them to our breasts since one keeps what is dear close to the heart. Thus we make this request. You are now wandering at night in the forest. Out of intense *prema*, they repeat their statements without recognizing the repetition. This is not a fault, but a good quality.

Previously, they mentioned he was wandering in the forest (*calasi*) but that was during the day. Now it is in the night and he is wandering. During the day while herding the cows he wanders where there is lots of grass. He will not contact sharp stones. In the night, it is possible he will step on sharp stones. Though there is no need to worry about sharp stones because of the nature of Vṛndāvana, they develop worry since that is their nature. *Aniṣṭāśaṅkīnīva bandhu-hṛḍayāni bhavanti:* a relative or intimate friend is always fearful of some injury to his beloved. *(Abhijñāna-śakuntalā-nāṭaka)*

We are bewildered (*bhramati*) because we have placed our lives in you. Thus his pain is reflected in their lives. Now, we cannot tolerate

maintaining our lives at all. There is now more pain, with fainting. Instead of *aṭasi* sometimes *nayasi* is seen. This means “you go.”

This statement at the end reminds one of Rādhā, who is suggested by the words *sva-jana* in the previous verse. The pain in the heart of the previous verse can mean the worry about Kṛṣṇa’s pain as he wanders in the forest. We desire to extinguish (*niṣūdanam*) that pain. That will be achieved by seeing him. Naḥ in the plural indicates the whole group of her *sakhīs*, or all the *gopīs*, according to one’s mood.

They mention twice his feet being injured because of the softness of his feet. They pray twice to place those feet on their breasts. *Sāraṅgāṇāṁ padambhujam*: his lotus feet are the refuge of pure devotees who never talk or sing of any subject except his Lordship. (SB 1.11.26) They are unable even to do that because of their misery and devotion. Twice they pray for the nectar of his lips since it is the cause of their life. They constantly describe his face, since it is especially attractive. Other things could also be mentioned by the devotees having taste and sympathy with the pastime.

Chapter Thirty-two
The Reunion

Text 32.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti gopyaḥ pragāyantyaḥ pralapantyaś ca citradhā
ruruduḥ su-svaraṁ rājan kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, having thus loudly sung and intensely spoken in various ways, the *gopīs* began to weep loudly because of their eagerness to see Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: *Iti* means in the manner previously described and also with additional items. That is Śrīdhara Svāmī's explanation. Or *iti* modifies *citradhā*: after speaking in many ways as described. They sang loudly out of intense *prema* and sometimes spoke in the same way. Or they lamented. Or they spoke some words without meaning because of bewilderment in separation. *Citradhā* should be applied to all the verbs. They cried with pitiful, drawn out voices (*su-svaram*). They were eager to see Kṛṣṇa who attracted their hearts. This can be the cause of their crying and singing.

Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit, "O King! Because of their longing to see him, this weeping was appropriate."

Or though longing to see Kṛṣṇa now, they all sang the previously mentioned song of Rādhā-devī, with great attachment. Their hearts broke on hearing it, and they loudly talked.

Text 32.2

tāsām āvirabhūc chauriḥ smayamāna-mukhāmbujaḥ
pītāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa, a smile on his lotus face, appeared before the gopīs, wearing a garland and a yellow garment. He directly appeared as one who can bewilder the mind of Cupid, though Cupid himself bewilders the minds of ordinary people.

COMMENTARY: He became visible to the *gopīs* suffering in this manner (*tāsām*). This shows that they attained him because of their great pain. On

hearing them cry, he began to consider that they (*tāsām*) were at the point of death from crying in misery at the thought that he was suffering. This shows that one can attain Kṛṣṇa by one's intense misery, in which one surrenders to him completely while not thinking of one's own interests. He appeared in the Śura dynasty to show his unlimited qualities as Bhagavān (*śauriḥ*). He was capable of simultaneously satisfying all of them (*śauriḥ*).

His lotus face smiled, not because of their crying in pain, but by his nature. Or he smiled to relieve them of lamentation. He held his yellow cloth, which was falling off because he hurriedly appeared by running. Or he held (*dharaḥ*) that cloth in his hand to wipe away their tears. He wore a garland of lotuses to cool them. Or in order to gain pardon for their intense pain, he held his cloth in his hand near his teeth, like grass, and bound the garland around his neck like a cloth.

He was directly the bewilderer of Cupid, since he was most attractive to them, with his manifestation of skill in love.

Or his beauty is described through the various elements listed above—his smile and his ornaments. The yellow cloth indicates his pastimes. The garland was made of jasmines, being the special glory of the night. *Kunda-srajaḥ kula-pateḥ:* the fragrance of his jasmine garland blew this way. (SB 10.30.11) Other unmentioned elements of charm and sweetness are represented by the phrase "directly the bewilderer of Cupid." This indicates their arousal of desire though they were afflicted by separation, and arousal of love in him as well. Or he was a greater disturber of the mind than Cupid. He is the ocean of the power of attraction. Cupid obtains his power of attraction from a small portion of Kṛṣṇa's power. Thus Kṛṣṇa is the real Cupid. Thus the *kāma-bīja* is the seed of his great mantra. He is also called Madana-gopāla.

Text 32.3

taṁ vilokyāgataṁ preṣṭhaṁ prīty-utphulla-dṛśo 'balāḥ
uttasthur yugapat sarvās tanvaḥ prāṇam ivāgatam

When the gopīs saw that their dearest Kṛṣṇa had returned to them, they all stood up at once, and out of their affection for him their eyes bloomed wide. It was as if the air of life had reentered their bodies.

COMMENTARY: They saw him coming, according to their desires. Or he just appeared among them (*āgatam*). Or first he appeared suddenly at a distance, and then gradually came close to them. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *tato daḍśur āyāntaṁ vikāsī-mukhapaṅkajam:* then they saw him coming with a smiling lotus face. They saw him in a particular way (*vilokya*): because of their crying they could not see him clearly or though they saw him, they were unsure because of great pain, and thus looked carefully at him. Their eyes opened wide out of joy and affection. Though they were incapable of rising because of intolerable separation (*abalāḥ*—weak women), they rose up simultaneously because he was their dearest (*preṣṭham).*

"How was it possible for them to rise together, since they were almost dead?" It was as if the life air had returned to their bodies. He was their reason for living or dying. Or first their eyes became wide with joy, and then they stood up, just as after stretching the body one engages in activities. The word *āgatam* is mentioned twice since his coming was the only reason for their ability to stand up.

Text 32.4

kācit karāmbujaṁ śaurer jagṛhe 'ñjalinā mudā
kācid dadhāra tad-bāhum aṁse candana-bhūṣitam

One gopī joyfully took Kṛṣṇa's hand between her folded palms, and another placed his arm, anointed with sandalwood paste, on her shoulder.

COMMENTARY: Now, because he had come, the pain in separation disappeared in all of them. They rejoiced. This is described in six verses (4-9). The activities in *prema* of the eight principal *gopīs* are described separately in five verses (4-8). One of them took one of Kṛṣṇa's hands, since his other hand was holding his cloth, and that action created beauty. His hand is compared to lotus because of its beautiful pink color and its ability to remove pain. She took that hand in her hands, folded because of great devotion. She was joyful because her suffering in separation was removed. That applies to others later described also.

Another *gopī* placed the arm of indescribable beauty (*tat*) or his (*tat*) arm on her shoulder. *Śaureḥ* from the first line can be applied to the arm also.

The arm smeared with sandalwood indicates its beauty and ability to remove suffering.

Text 32.5

kācid añjalināgṛhṇāt tanvī tāmbūla-carvitam
ekā tad-aṅghri-kamalaṁ santaptā stanayor adhāt

A slender gopī respectfully took in her joined hands the betel-nut he had chewed, and another gopī, burning with desire, put his lotus feet on her breasts.

COMMENTARY: One *gopī*, folding her hands with devotion, took his betel-nut. Or with a desire to receive a lot, she opened her hands to receive it. Or since it was full of taste, she feared some would fall on the ground. She was thin because of the separation. Because it was tasty, the Lord had previously brought the betel-nut and was chewing it. Or it had been offered by Vṛndā-devī. One *gopī* placed one of his feet on her breasts. This means he was seated. Later it is said *tatropaviṣṭaḥ*: he was seated. (SB 10.32.14) She placed the foot there because her breast was suffering. Otherwise the fever of love arising from the pain of separation would not dissipate. One version has *hṛdaye*, with the same meaning.

Text 32.6

ekā bhru-kuṭim ābadhya prema-saṁrambha-vihvalā
ghnantīvaikṣat kaṭākṣepaiḥ sandaṣṭa-daśana-cchadā

One gopī, filled with loving anger, bit her lips and stared at him with frowning eyebrows, as if to wound him with her harsh glances.

COMMENTARY: Agitated with anger in love, one *gopī* frowned intensely (*ābadhya*) and then became confused by that anger. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

kācit bhru-bhaṅguram kṛvtvā lalāṭa-phalakam harim
vilokya netra-bhṛṅgābhyām papau tan-mukha-pañkajam

One *gopī* frowned at Kṛṣṇa with *tilaka* on his forehead. Seeing him with her bee-like eyes, she drank his lotus face.

The *gopī* looked at him with her frowning glance as if to beat him. There should be a reason why the *gopī* was angry. She also bit her lip to indicate

the anger. Or this is a consequence of *prema* itself.

Text 32.7

aparānimiṣad-dṛgbhyāṁ juṣāṇā tan-mukhāmbujam
āpītam api nātṛpyat santas tac-caraṇaṁ yathā

Another gopī looked with unblinking eyes upon his lotus face, but even after deeply relishing its sweetness she did not feel satiated, just as peaceful devotees are never satiated when meditating upon the Lord's feet.

COMMENTARY: Another *gopī* looked with affection at his face. She drank (*āpītam*) his nectar like a bee. This means she looked with complete absorption, in great affection. She was not fully satisfied. In one part only she was like the *dāsya* devotees who are attracted to the Lord's lotus feet as in sāmyam abhipretaṁ kintu sāraṅgāṇāṁ padāmbujam: his lotus feet are the shelter of the bee-like devotees. (SB 1.11.26)

The similarity is in not being fully satisfied. Others are satisfied with his feet, but they are greedy for the nectar of his lips. Thus they have an attraction for his face.

That is their special *prema*. Since the other devotees do not experience the softness of his feet, in this verse lotus is not mentioned with his feet (*tac-caraṇam*).

Text 32.8

taṁ kācin netra-randhreṇa hṛdi kṛtvā nimīlya ca
pulakāṅgy upaguhyāste yogīvānanda-samplutā

One gopī took the Lord through the aperture of her eyes and placed him within her heart. Then, with her eyes closed and her bodily hairs standing on end, filled with bliss, she continuously embraced him within. She resembled a yogī meditating upon the Lord.

COMMENTARY: One *gopī,* being very shy and obedient, could not look at him constantly. She placed him in her heart through her eyes in order to experience his unlimited beauty by a complete manifestation of his limbs in her mind. She closed her eyes since the eyes would concentrate on one limb and it would be impossible to see other limbs in her mind. Or she

feared that he would escape from her open eyes. Actually however, it was simply the nature arising from increased *prema*. She embraced him in her mind. The word *ca* indicates that she chanted, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!"

kācid āyāntam ālokya govindam atiharṣitā
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti prāha nānyad udairayat

One *gopī* in great bliss glanced at Kṛṣṇa when he arrived. Saying his name repeatedly she said nothing else. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.13.44)

If verse 6 refers to one *gopī* only, then this *gopī* described by Parāśara would be an eighth *gopī*.

She remained for a moment absorbed completely in bliss, concentrating on the Lord by meditation (*yogī*).

kācid ālokya govindaṁ nimīlita-vilocanā
tasyaiva rūpaṁ dhyāyantī yogārūḍeva cābabau

One *gopī*, glancing at Kṛṣṇa with half-closed eyes, meditated on his form, as if in accomplished meditation. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5.13.45)

The example of the *yogī* indicates that she was not aware of the external world. Bringing the Lord through her eyes to her heart is her special nature. She derived greater bliss from seeing him directly than from seeing him in meditation. That is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta*. Since she embraced him and had the *bhāva* of a woman (*kācit*), she experienced greater bliss than associates who see the Lord directly or the cowherds.

I offer respects to the eight beloveds of Kṛṣṇa, Candrāvalī, Bhadrā, Padmā, Śaibya, Śyāmā, Viśākhā, Lalitā and Rādhā. The reason their names are not directly mentioned in the verses had been explained. Though they do not have a great difference in their *prema*, since each attained the highest experience in meeting Kṛṣṇa, they each acted according to their *bhāva* or according to their desire at that moment. Distinguishing some difference in these *gopīs* who are worshipable by liberated souls and are superior to the associates in Vaikuṇṭha, among the eight, Rādhā is famous as the best in all ways. According to that consideration, their *bhāvas* and actions have been described individually.

Text 32.9

sarvās tāḥ keśavāloka-paramotsava-nirvṛtāḥ
jahur viraha-jaṁ tāpaṁ prājñaṁ prāpya yathā janāḥ

All the gopīs enjoyed the greatest festivity when they saw their beloved, most beautiful Kṛṣṇa again. They gave up the distress of separation, just as people in general forget their misery when they gain the association of a great devotee.

COMMENTARY: Not only they gave up suffering and became joyful,all others also became joyful. *Keśava* means he who has beauty. *Va* means to exist and *keśa* means beauty. Even one of his hairs has all beauty. Even seeing him a little (*āloka*) produced a cessation of pain of separation (*nirvṛtāḥ*) by fulfilment of all desires or expansion of the heart (*utsava*). Or they extinguished all suffering by joking in *prema* (*paramotsava*) and looking at him intently (*āloka*).

An example is given. *Prājñām* means he who knows completely the best topics, the great devotee who knows the glories of Kṛṣṇa and *bhakti*. People (*janāḥ*), or the Vaiṣṇavas (*ajanāḥ*), on again associating affectionately with such a great devotee, after he has gone elsewhere, destroy their pain of separation. Only devotees meeting devotees can be compared to devotees meeting the Lord, just as only the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa can be compared to the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa.

Text 32.10

tābhir vidhūta-śokābhir bhagavān acyuto vṛtaḥ
vyarocatādhikaṁ tāta puruṣaḥ śaktibhir yathā

Encircled by the gopīs, who were now relieved of all distress, Kṛṣṇa, perfect in himself, without fault, shone forth more splendidly than previously. My dear King, Kṛṣṇa thus appeared like the jīva encircled by his senses.

COMMENTARY: By the bliss of the Lord, by the manifestation of his qualities, there was additional beauty. He was surrounded by the *gopīs* whose pain from separation had been destroyed. Details are given by Parāśara:

tataḥ kāścit priyālāpaiḥ kāścid bhrū-bhaṅga-vīkṣitaiḥ
nitye 'nunayam anyāś ca kara-sparśena mādhava

Kṛṣṇa pacified some by pleasing words, some by glancing with moving eyebrows, and some by touching them with his hand. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

The Lord, though full of all powers and never failing to display great beauty at any time by any means at all (*acyutaḥ*), shone exceptionally, more than before. Or he shone exceptionally because he was Bhagavān, displaying all his unlimited qualities. But though he had attained the height of beauty, by being surrounded by the *gopīs*, he shone even more. An example is given.

The *jīva*, though endowed with all *śakti* as Brahman, with a manifestation of that *śakti* in the form of his senses (*śaktibhiḥ*), shines more than before. Otherwise he is in a state comparable to fainting. The Lord shone additionally by being surrounded by his beloveds, with the manifestation of his sweetness and mercy. Otherwise, even though being served by a host of devotees, he will not manifest his full unlimited glories as Bhagavān. Śukadeva exclaims "O son (*tāta*)!" in astonishment or indicating Parīkṣit's qualification to understand. Or on remembering the incident, he becomes confused with *prema*.

Texts 32.11–12

tāḥ samādāya kālindyā nirviśya pulinaṁ vibhuḥ
vikasat-kunda-mandāra surabhy-anila-ṣaṭpadam
śarac-candrāṁśu-sandoha-dhvasta-doṣā-tamaḥ śivam
kṛṣṇāyā hasta-taralā cita-komala-vālukam

The almighty Lord then took the *gopīs* with him to another the bank of the Kālindī and entered its middle area with a breeze bearing the fragrance of blooming kunda and mandāra flowers, attracting many bees. The abundant rays of the autumn moon dispelled the darkness of night and the hands of the waves scattered piles of soft sand upon the shore.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Two verses show another way in which his beauty was enhanced in a special way (*vi-rocyata*). He took each one of them individually by his hand (*sam-ādāya*), in order to go to a bank more suitable than the previous one, for the *rāsa* dance. He came to the center of that area (*nirviśya*).

Being everywhere (*vibhuḥ*), he simultaneously appeared with each *gopī* to carry out pacification. The suitability of the bank for the *rāsa* dance is described with ingredients acting as *uddīpanas* for their love. The breeze was cool, fragrant, and soft, since there were bees in it. The rays of the moon made the place most pleasant. The fullness of the moon destroyed the darkness of night. It was as light as daytime. The Yamunā was Kṛṣṇa's friend, having the same name and color. Thus with her hands she spread sand. She gets her name Kṛṣṇā because she attracts Kṛṣṇa's heart with her variegated beauty.

vṛndāvanaṁ govardhanaṁ yamunā-pulināni ca
vīkṣyāsīd uttamā prītī rāma-mādhavayor nṛpa

O King Parīkṣit, when Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa saw Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the banks of the River Yamunā, they both enjoyed great pleasure. SB 10.11.36

By spreading the sand with her hands, the place became even and devoid of hard spots. Or, he entered the middle of the bank area (*niviśya*) with the gopīs (*samādāya*), and remained there in a special way (*vibhuḥ*). This means he revealed his powers. Then the revelation of his power is described in the next two verses (13-14).

Text 32.13

tad-darśanāhlāda-vidhūta-hṛd-rujo
manorathāntaṁ śrutayo yathā yayuḥ
svair uttarīyaiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitair
acīkḷpann āsanam ātma-bandhave

Their heartache vanquished by the joy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* had their desires completely fulfilled, just as the Vedas become fulfilled by revealing Kṛṣṇa. For their dear friend Kṛṣṇa they arranged a seat with their shawls which were smeared with the kuṅkuma powder from their breasts.

COMMENTARY: The service in *prema* of the overjoyed *gopīs* is described. All their worries were completely destroyed by seeing Kṛṣṇa. This means that their previous worry that he would again disappear had vanished. Thus, with all worries vanquished, by coming to this place with him, they

understood that they would remain there for a long time for the *rāsa-līlā*. Not only was their intense grief dissipated but they attained the highest joy: they attained their desire, the highest goal (*manorathāntam*). Or it was as if they attained their goal, the *rāsa* dance, which was about to occur. An example is given of the *śrutis.* The *śrutis,* revealing him with his attractive pastimes, seemed to attain him. They did not directly attain him.

tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyāṁ
yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhiṣekam
yaj-jīvitaṁ tu nikhilaṁ bhagavān mukundas
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajaḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Lord, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is sought even today by the Upaniṣads. (SB 10.14.34)

Or joyful on seeing the Lord, cleansed of the pain in their hearts, they attained the end of their desire, seeing him. With the disappearance of the intense pains of separation, from the gradual disappearance of the last impressions, even the *śrutis*, seeing the Lord, gave up the pain of desire.

Or they were fixed in their desire because there was no superior desire. They attained him and desired the *rāsa* dance. The *śrutis*, on seeing the Lord, desired *bhakti* to him.

They made a seat in a very charming manner by using their upper cloths—cloths used for covering the whole body or their breasts, which were stained with *kuṅkuma* from their breasts because of their crying in separation. "How did they manage to give up their shyness and make a seat for him from their clothing stained with *kuṅkuma*?" They did this because they felt he was dearest to them (*ātma-bandhave*). They would be aggrieved at making him sit on the ground. Thus with friendly *prema* they made a seat, with great enthusiasm, inspired, without independent thought. Making the seat, they surrounded him, protecting him, fearing he would disappear. Or they asked about his comfort.

Or they offered the seat to he who was dearer than themselves (*ātma-bandhave*). They were bewildered by great *prema*. They piled up their fine

upper cloths to make a thick seat. Or each group made a seat.

Text 32.14

tatropaviṣṭo bhagavān sa īśvaro
yogeśvarāntar-hṛdi kalpitāsanaḥ
cakāsa gopī-pariṣad-gato ‘rcitas
trailokya-lakṣmy-eka-padaṁ vapur dadhat

Though masters of yoga fix a seat for him by intense concentration of their minds, Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers and capable of revealing those powers, took his seat on that stained cloth, in the assembly of gopīs and revealed impossible beauty. He revealed in front of them a manifestation which gave exclusive shelter to the wealth of all types of beauty of all objects existing until his appearance in all the three worlds and even Mahā-vaikuṇṭha.

COMMENTARY: Though he is supremely independent (*īśvaraḥ*), endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*), the crest jewel of *rasikas*, who increases the ocean of sweet *prema*, Kṛṣṇa, sat on the seat and shone.

Or revealing his essential qualities as Bhagavān, endowed with all *śaktis* (*īśvaraḥ*), he sat on each of the seats individually to satisfy each *gopī* and himself, while others could not see. In *samādhi* sages like the Kumāras (*yogeśvara*) with great effort make jeweled seats for him to sit on during mental worship while concentrating fully in their hearts. Or they offer him a seat by saying “*āsanam kalpayāmi*” during worship. It is hinted that he does not accept these seats.

He shone. Another reason is given. He was in the center surrounded by the assembly of seated *gopīs*. This indicates his lordship. He had been respected by them by their offering him seats. Or they worshipped him by jokes, glances, and offerings of betel-nut. Though the Lord’s body is always the shelter of all wealth in the three worlds, now it took on excellence like never before. This shows the nature of his shining.

Text 32.15

sabhājayitvā tam anaṅga-dīpanaṁ
sahāsa-līlekṣaṇa-vibhrama-bhruvā

saṁsparśanenāṅka-kṛtāṅghri-hastayoḥ
saṁstutya īṣat kupitā babhāṣire

Kṛṣṇa had awakened romantic desires within the gopīs, and they honored him by glancing at him with playful smiles, gesturing amorously with their eyebrows, and massaging his hands and feet as they held them in their laps. Even while worshiping him, however, they felt somewhat angry, and thus they addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: Worshipping him is repeated so that they can ask their question. They worshipped (*sabhājayitvā*) him completely or with special respect because he had manifested their desires with many varieties though their desire was previously without such varieties. Though previously he had accepted it, now he manifested more desire in them than previously. There was an extreme increase in desire.

They skillfully massaged his hands and feet (or hand and foot) which he or they had placed in their laps. This shows lordship (*aiśvarya*). After simultaneously massaging his hands and feet and praising him in order to ask the question and receive an answer, they spoke, with slight anger. Because of the great *prema*, the anger was slight. Or the anger was internal, and manifested externally, slightly. Or in anger, remembering their previous suffering, they spoke slightly because they were skillful at speaking. Or they were angry because of the many words he had spoken when they had first arrived. Or without being angry, he would not know the intentions of their hearts, and would not answer them. Or by frowning in anger they had increased his desire. Or since he had respected one *gopī* he should respect them all. Thus it is said that he had increased their desire. The cause of their anger and their speaking should be considered.

Text 32.16

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ
bhajato 'nubhajanty eka eka etad-viparyayam
nobhayāṁś ca bhajanty eka etan no brūhi sādhu bhoḥ

The gopīs said: Some people reciprocate the affection only of those who are affectionate toward them, while others show affection even to those

who are indifferent or inimical. And yet others will not show affection toward anyone. Dear Kṛṣṇa, please properly explain this matter to us.

COMMENTARY: They ask the question in order to prevent his giving them up again and to negate his ingratitude. There are three questions. Please explain what these situations are, or what their result is, clearly. Thinking carefully about this, explain to us, so that it is easy to understand. They say this because they see that he is pretending to be inattentive, since he fears they will try to find fault with him.

Text 32.17

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mitho bhajanti ye sakhyaḥ svārthaikāntodyamā hi te
na tatra sauhṛdaṁ dharmaḥ svārthārthaṁ tad dhi nānyathā

The Lord said: O friends! Those who show affection for each other only to benefit themselves are actually selfish. They have no true friendship, nor are they following dharma. They expect benefit for themselves alone and nothing else.

COMMENTARY: They strive with full absorption (*eka*) for visible results for themselves. This does not refer to service to guru by devotees and service in *prema*. It is rejected as dharma since its goal is for the self only, though by material vision it appears to be helping others. Real service depends on a proper response. If the response is only for the purpose of removing fault, it also is not dharma. There should be an absence of difference in true worship or sharing: without equality in the assistance and repayment, sharing cannot be accomplished. According to the act, there should be an equal response. That is the answer to the question. And where there is no expectation of a response, that act is dharma. *Hi* indicates certainty. Any other method is not proper worship.

Or with friendship, one may compassionately act for others as one does for oneself. To show the opposite situation in the verse, he says O friends (*sakhya*)!

One version has *svātmānam* instead of *svārthārtham.* One works for one's own happiness (*su*). *Tad* means *ca,* or *atha.* Though there is apparently mutual benefit in this example, since the act is generated by self-interest,

and depends on receiving a proper response, it lacks dharma and truthfulness, and consequently is without happiness. Or this could be a typographical error. *Svārthārtham* is accepted by Citsukha and others. Though the worship may appear to be for other purposes it is actually for one's own purposes.

Or persons who strive for their own ends (*svārthaikāntodyamā*) mutually interact, like a king paying a servant. This is well known (*hi*). Since all people are interested in visible results, they are not described in detail.

Text 32.18

bhajanty abhajato ye vai karuṇāḥ pitarau yathā
dharmo nirapavādo 'tra sauhṛdaṁ ca su-madhyamāḥ

My dear slender-waisted gopīs, some people are genuinely merciful or, like parents, naturally affectionate. Such persons, who devotedly serve even those who fail to reciprocate with them, are following perfect dharma, and they are true friends.

COMMENTARY: Some do not reciprocate, out of misery or because they are infants. This is well known (*vai*). Parents are used as an example to show causeless, natural compassion. The Lord says

sādhūnāṁ sama-cittānāṁ sutarāṁ mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā

When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a merciful devotee, who is fully peaceful and surrendered to the Supreme Lord, one will no longer be subject to material bondage. (SB 10.10.41)

Commenting on this verse Śrīdhara Svāmī says, "The devotees are most merciful (*sādhūnām*) and they do not take offense seriously (*sama-cittānām*). Because they are constantly devoted to me (*mat-kṛtātmanām*), these two qualities naturally follow."

There are two types: merciful persons and parents. Or both are given as examples. *Ca* should be added after *pitarau.* Their dharma is perfect (*nirapavādaḥ*) since they do not expect a response and they help out of great compassion. Their friendship is perfect since it is based on natural

affection. Parents cannot have dharma if they do not protect their children. One should examine the dharma of a mother and father. They and merciful persons have dharma. O beautiful women! That dharma is beauty. Or that dharma shines in you. This is his skill to have them worship him.

Text 32.19

bhajato 'pi na vai kecid bhajanty abhajataḥ kutaḥ
ātmārāmā hy āpta-kāmā akṛta-jñā guru-druhaḥ

Those individuals who are spiritually self-satisfied, those materially satisfied, those who are ignorant, and those who intentionally offend those who act for others' welfare do not respond even those who love them, what to speak of those who are inimical.

COMMENTARY: Some indeed (*vai*) do not worship others whether there is reciprocation or not. Certainly (*hi*) the *ātmārāmas* are of this nature. *Hi* can also mean "because." *Akṛta-jñā* means those who are not aware that others act for their welfare. Though able to respond, and dependent on public opinion, because of ignorance they do not respond. They are fools. Because they are ignorant, they do not respond. Those who, though knowing and capable, do not respond are utterly wicked (*guru-druhaḥ*).

The *gopīs* asked three questions in three phrases, and Kṛṣṇa answered with three verses (17-19). By the abbreviated skill of their questions, Kṛṣṇa answered to show that their glory is greater than his.

According to the *gopīs,* because he enjoys various pastimes with them, he cannot be an *ātmārāma* or an *āptakāma.* He is not *guru-druha*, since he does not offend gurus. Because he gives pain in separation, and does not respond properly, he cannot be the type of person mentioned in the previous verse who responds to those who reciprocate or not, nor is he the first type who responds because of motives.

The remaining choice is *akṛta-jña*. It is later said *akṛta-cetāḥ* (SB 10.47.16). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *akṛtajñā-dvajo hi saḥ*: he is the flag of ignorance. Śrīdhara Svāmī mentions *akṛta-jñā* as the ignorant person, and includes Kṛṣṇa in the *guru-druha* class. *Guru-druha* means "very hard" according to Śrīdhara Svāmī. By this, he should be considered a *guru-druha.*

Text 32.20

nāhaṁ tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn
bhajāmy amīṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye
yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe
tac-cintayānyan nibhṛto na veda

But the reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O gopīs, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else.

COMMENTARY: The word *tu* indicates a different subject. I am not one of those four types starting with the *ātmārāma.* Though people worship me I do not respond. He places the word *na* (not) first in the verse since he is agitated by the accusation that he caused them pain. O friends! This shows he is not an *ātmārāma.* I act like this towards all without distinction (*jantūn*), not just you. You should not worry that I am indifferent to you. "Why do you not respond?" I do this so that they practice constant meditation on me, in order to increase their *prema.* "But we are always engaged in meditating on you." That is true, but there is something special. He gives an example.

Someone gains a treasure and then loses it tragically *(vi-naṣṭe*). This indicates great lamentation. Then he becomes completely absorbed (*nibhṛtaḥ)* in thinking of that treasure.

Text 32.21

evaṁ mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda
svānām hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye 'balāḥ
mayāparokṣaṁ bhajatā tirohitaṁ
māsūyituṁ mārhatha tat priyaṁ priyāḥ

My dear girls, understanding that simply for my sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the Vedas and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to me. Even when I removed myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never

stopped loving you. Therefore, my beloved gopīs, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward me, your beloved.

COMMENTARY: O women, on your own you have no power (*abalāḥ*). Thus (*evam*), meditating on me, you gave up worldly opinion, Vedas and your relatives. Since we are mutually lovers, do not accept separation as my offense.

Or I was thinking of you alone, like the man who has lost his treasure (*evam*). The reason is given. You gave up everything for me. I thus disappeared to hear your conversations in *prema*, to sing your glories, to remember your special *bhāva*. Though disappearing, I remained here.

Or *anuvṛttaye* is connected with the example in the previous verse. You gave up everything to follow me. Was it just like the man who thinks only of his lost treasure? O friends (*sakhyaḥ*)! No, out of natural friendship, you even (*hi*) followed me. Did I respond properly to you? No. For me you gave up everything (which I did not do).

Or when you followed me, I did not respond properly. "Why?" Like the man thinking only of his lost treasure, you gave up everything for me, even the fourteen worlds, Vaikuṇṭha and *karmas* mentioned in the Vedas, and even husbands and sons. This is pure devotion. They are greater than those desiring liberation, those who have achieved liberation and the other devotees, since all these have a dependence on other things and lacked the *bhāva* of the *gopīs*.

"Then for what purpose did you disappear?" I did not go anywhere but remained here beside you, unseen (*parokṣam*), to hear your conversations in *prema* (*bhajatā*). Thus he rejects being a cheater. (SB 10.31.16)

Or I disappeared but directly (*aparokṣam*) heard (*bhajatā*). I was there, unseen by you. "That is faulty because it caused pain to your beloveds." Please forgive me. You are dear to me and I am dear to you.

Or "Why did you remain invisible?" That is a suitable action for a lover with his beloveds.

Or disappearing and hearing visibly is dear to me (*priyam*). It is pleasurable fun for me. "What great fun when you play with the lives of your beloveds!" O beloved gopīs (*priyāḥ*)! This will produce excellence in *prema*.

Or the word *mā* repeated indicates a double negation. You should hate me. "Why?" It is unsuitable for a lover to act towards his beloveds in this way (*priyam priyāḥ*). This shows his skill in being humble.

Text 32.22

na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ
sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvṛścya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā

I am not able to repay my debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahmā. Your connection with me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation.

COMMENTARY: *Vaḥ* means "to you." I cannot return your favor (*sva-sādhu-kṛtyam*) or cannot return the favor to you. Or, I am not able to suitably compensate your own extraordinary deed (*sva-sādhu-kṛtyam*). He shows the cause. Your association (*saṁyujām*) is faultless (*niravadya*), because it is not dependent on anything, is devoid of deceit, and is an expression of pure *prema*. It is free of the desire for liberation and free of the faults of base desires. The desire for me is a great quality, since association with me is faultless. Cutting the chains of attachment to house and activities for sons and husbands, difficult to cut, since they are the unbreakable bonds of *saṁsāra*, you (*bhavatī*) worshipped (*abhajat*) me. The use of the verb form with *bhavatī* indicates great respect for their *prema*. Since I do not do this, I cannot repay you.

Or I cannot repay even your cruel actions towards me (*su asadhu-kṛtyam*), what to speak of your favorable actions. He says this with greed for continual pastimes with them in a favorable way. He cannot repay them because they offer their spotless limbs or selves (*niravadya-saṁyujām)*. Moreover, you cut the invincible chains of serving relatives related to serving the cows. Thus I do not serve you. Another version has *śṛṅkhalām* with the same meaning. The bondage is compared to unbreakable chains. This means that, by one's own powers, one cannot overcome them.

Though one can break the attachment, one cannot reject the external relationships, even though one wishes to do so. *Saṁvrścya* means that they cut the attachment and the external relationships completely. I cannot respond properly giving myself completely like you, without regard for anything else. I am in debt to you because I fail to keep my own promise. *Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham:* accordingly as they surrender, I response. (BG 4.11)

Or let some gentle devotee (*sadhu nā*) follow and serve you (*vaḥ pratiyātu*), as the payment. This is a blessing. Or let the gentle devotee imitate (*pratiyātu*) your great activities (*sva-sādhu-kṛtyam*), but I cannot do that. I cannot repay you at all. Later Kṛṣṇa speaks of Rukmiṇī's trust in him. *Pratinandayāmaḥ*: I can do nothing to reciprocate, except joyfully thank you for your devotion. (SB 10.60.57) There also, he says he is a debtor, unable to repay by his joy. But the actions of the *gopīs* are even harder to repay.

Chapter Thirty-three
The Rāsa Dance

Text 33.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
itthaṁ bhagavato gopyaḥ śrutvā vācaḥ su-peśalāḥ
jahur viraha-jaṁ tāpaṁ tad-aṅgopacitāśiṣaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the gopīs heard the Lord speak these most charming words, they forgot their distress caused by separation from him. Touching his limbs, they felt all their desires fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the most attractive (*supeśalāḥ*) words of Bhagavān, who revealed his unlimited nature by these words, they gave up the pain from past and future separation. This is a repetition of a previous statement because they had not completely given up separation. Now they completely gave up their pain, thinking that there would no longer be any separation, since he had explained his indebtedness. They gave up their pain because they were filled with natural *prema-rasa* (*gopyaḥ*). Their desires were fulfilled by embracing him and holding his hands. Or because of his skillful words, they felt their desires fulfilled in all their limbs.

Text 33.2

tatrārabhata govindo rāsa-krīḍām anuvrataiḥ
strī-ratnair anvitaḥ prītair anyonyābaddha-bāhubhiḥ

When their mindswere in harmony, Govinda then began the pastime of the *rāsa* dance in the company of those best among women, who were dedicated only to him, who joyfully linked their arms together with him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

When his mind was in harmony with their minds (*tatra*), he then began the *rāsa* dance, a huge festival, which he desired to perform previously, on attaining these women whom he most desired. He had the excellence of the supreme male by revealing his outstanding powers and sweetness as the lord of Gokula (*govindaḥ*). They were the best of all women (*srtī-*

ratnaiḥ). *Nānārtha-varga* says *ratna* means best of a species. This shows the best ingredients for the *rāsa* dance. They were furthermore influenced by the most intense *prema* for him (*prītaiḥ*) and were solely dependent on him (*anuvrataiḥ*). There were many hands. *Anyonyam* refers to all the *gopīs*, rather than one *gopī* being with him. There was a *gopī* on either side of him holding his neck. That is the characteristic of the *rāsa* dance.

naṭer gṛhīta-kaṇṭhanām anyonyātta-kara-śriyām
nartakīnām bhaved rāso maṇḍalī-bhūya nartanam

Rāsa dance is defined as women holding the neck of the male dancer on either side and forming a circle.

They thought "He should remain in this circle and not leave." Thus they held their hands tightly (*ābaddha*).

Text 33.3

rāsotsavaḥ sampravṛtto gopī-maṇḍala-maṇḍitaḥ
yogeśvareṇa kṛṣṇena tāsāṁ madhye dvayor dvayoḥ
praviṣṭena gṛhītānāṁ kaṇṭhe sva-nikaṭaṁ striyaḥ
yaṁ manyeran nabhas tāvad vimāna-śata-saṅkulam
divaukasāṁ sa-dārāṇām autsukyāpahṛtātmanām

The festive rāsa dance commenced, with the gopīs arrayed in a circle. Kṛṣṇa expanded himself and entered between each pair of gopīs, placing his arms around their necks. Because he was the master of yoga-māyā each girl thought he was standing next to her alone. The devatās and their wives were overwhelmed with eagerness to witness the rāsa dance, and they soon crowded the sky with their hundreds of celestial airplanes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Rāsa means a combination of the highest *rasa.* This is a joyous festival of special playing (*utsava*). This festival of *rāsa* was excellently started (*sampravṛttaḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa, the form of condensed bliss.

The excellence is shown. It was decorated with the *gopīs* in a circle, which made them appear more beautiful. The details of the commencement are described by Parāśara:

rāsa-maṇḍala-bandho 'pi kṛṣṇa-pārśvam-anujjhatā
gopījanena naivābhūd ekasthāna-sthirātmanā
hastena gṛhya caikaikāṁ gopīnāṁ rāsa-maṇḍale
cakāra tat-kara-sparśa-nimīlitadṛśaṁ hariḥ
tataḥ pravavṛte rāsaś calad valaya-nisvanaḥ
anuyāta-śaratkāvya-geya-gītir anukramāt

The circle of the *rāsa* did not keep him situated in one place, since the *gopīs* could not give up being by Kṛṣṇa's side. In the circle he took the hand of each one of the *gopīs*, who closed their eyes when he touched them. The *rāsa* dance began, filled with the jingling of moving bangles, filled with songs praising the present autumn season. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Madhye dvayor dvayoḥ means he was situated between a pair of *gopīs*, rather than just situated with two *gopīs.* This means there was a *gopī* on either side. Verse 6 mentions that he was a sapphire among many jewels. That is a general description. Here it means that he was between two *gopīs* with his arm on each of their necks.

Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura has written the following verse about the *rāsa* dance:

aṅganām aṅganām antarā mādhavo
mādhavaṁ mādhavaṁ cāntareṇāṅganāḥ
ittham ākalpite maṇḍale madhya-gaḥ
sañjagau veṇunā devakī-nandanaḥ

Mādhava was situated between each pair of *gopīs*, and a *gopī* was situated between his pair of manifestations. And Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī also appeared in the middle of the circle, playing upon is flute and singing.

Krama-dīpikā says *sudṛśām ubhayoḥ pṛthag antara-gam*: he was situated between two *gopīs*. But the worship of a *gopī* and Kṛṣṇa is prescribed rather than worship of Kṛṣṇa and two *gopīs.* This was the conduct of one qualified male among many women (*strīṣu*) who desired his association simultaneously out of great *anurāga.* There would be a fault if there was inequality. This would interrupt the happiness. Each thought he was with her alone.

The following should be considered. Kṛṣṇa began the *rāsa* dance to give happiness to all of them. All the *gopīs* could see the *rāsa* as most

magnificent. Therefore this perception was proper. By some dancing skills he appeared as many. He also used *māyā,* otherwise the phrase "each saw him with her alone" would not have been used. Thus each thought he was alone with her. Though Kṛṣṇa was on either side of her, the *gopī* could not discern this because she was overcome with unlimited bliss. Thus the main reason they thought in this way previously and now was their bewilderment caused by bliss. That he appeared as one person on entering the *rāsa* is solved in the following manner. He was *yogeśvara,* the master of special inconceivable, astonishing *śakti*. This arose by his will alone, without ordering, since it is his innate *śakti.*

Those who by their nature roam in the sky gathered together on suddenly seeing the *rāsa* dance. The sky became filled with airplanes. Or they gave up the direction where the moon was situated and rose above the moon into the open sky. "The inhabitants of the sky" refers to Brahmā, Śiva and others. This means there were no such festivals in Svarga or other planets. They became eager for the dancing part of the *rāsa*, not the confidential pastimes, since they were not qualified, being in *dāsya-rāsa.* They came for the dancing. The confidential pastimes were hidden from them by *yoga-māyā.*

Text 33.4

tato dundubhayo nedur nipetuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ
jagur gandharva-patayaḥ sa-strīkās tad-yaśo 'malam

Kettledrums then resounded in the sky while flowers rained down and the chief Gandharvas and their wives sang his spotless glories.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

From the *devatās* and others (*tataḥ*) arose the sound of drums or after that (*tataḥ*) the drums sounded on their own since they were celestial instruments and because of the nature of the great, auspicious festival. That should be understood when drums are mentioned later also. First the drums sounded for auspiciousness and for gathering the different groups of *gopīs*. Showers of flowers fell everywhere (*ni-petuḥ*). Thus flowers were spread all over the dancing arena. The Gandharvas sang with their wives

and the Apsarās. They were all dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, whose fame was spotless. Because of this, at this time they all were also spotless—free of all bad desires.

Text 33.5

valayānāṁ nūpurāṇāṁ kiṅkiṇīnāṁ ca yoṣitām
sa-priyāṇām abhūc chabdas tumulo rāsa-maṇḍale

A tumultuous sound arose from the armlets, ankle bells and waist bells of the gopīs as they sported with their beloved Kṛṣṇa in the circle of the rāsa dance.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having described the festival produced by the *devatās,* the instruments and singing suitable for the *rāsa* dance are described. First, the sounds from the *gopīs'* ornaments are described. The bells were on the belts and other accessories of the *gopīs*. The word *yoṣitām* suggests that it was natural for these ornaments and sounds since they were women. The sound arose from the women each of whom had Kṛṣṇa with them (*sapriyāṇām).* That sound arose in the circle they formed for the *rāsa* dance.

Text 33.6

tatrātiśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
madhye maṇīnāṁ haimānāṁ mahā-marakato yathā

Kṛṣṇa, though naturally endowed with all powers, appeared most brilliant in the midst of the dancing gopīs, like a sapphire in the midst of golden gems.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa who is known to you as the son of Devakī, even though he is endowed with all powers and all beauty (*bhagavān*), appeared most beautiful with these *gopīs*. Or, he appears very beautiful as the son of Yaśodā (*devakī-sutaḥ*[1]) but now appeared even more beautiful in this place and appeared most beautiful with the *gopīs*. This is shown by an

example. The singular *madhya* is used to indicate a general case, though actually he had many forms and was thus in the middle of many pairs of *gopīs*. He was also in one form in the center of the circle. He was with Rādhā wandering about while playing his flute, making the *rāsa* circle even more beautiful. This is known from the description of the *rāsa* in *Krama-dīpikā.*

itaretara-baddha-kara-pramadā-
gaṇa-kalpita-rāsa-vihāra-vidhau
maṇi-śaṅku-gam apy amunāvapuṣā
bahudhā vihita-svaka-divya-tanum
sudṛśām ubhayoḥ pṛthag-antaragaṁ
dayitā-gaṇa-baddha-bhuja-dvitayam
maṇi-nirmita-madhyaga-śaṅku-lasad-
vipulāruṇa-paṅkaja-madhya-gatam
taruṇī-kuca-yuk-parirambha-milad-
ghusṛṇāruṇa-vakṣasam ukṣa-gatim

Holding hands with alternate *gopīs* in the *rāsa* dance, with *gopīs* on either side, he expanded his shining body, like a jewel pillar, into many forms. In the middle, he was like a blossoming pink lotus within a jewel pillar in their midst. Walking like a bull, he appeared pink from the *kuṅkuma* from the *gopī's* breasts which stuck to his chest.

Bilvamaṅgala also said *madhya-gaḥ sañjagau veṇunā:* he was in the middle playing his flute.

He was like a jewel in the center of golden jewels. In Goloka, gold transforms so that it looks like gems. As a general statement, *marakata* is in the singular, though there were many Kṛṣṇas there.

Since he is described as a group of clouds (*megha-cakra*) among lightning in the next verse, in this verse, just as a huge dark jewel (*mahā-marakata*) becomes more beautiful among gold gems, so he became more beautiful by the embrace of the *gopīs*. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, *mahā-marakataḥ* means a sapphire (whereas *marakata* means an emerald, which is green). Or, in close contact with the golden hue of the *gopīs*, his bluish complexion became greenish like a great emerald. This was caused by the dancing, and was not his intrinsic feature.

Text 33.7

pāda-nyāsair bhuja-vidhutibhiḥ sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair
bhajyan madhyaiś cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ kuṇḍalair gaṇḍa-lolaiḥ
svidyan-mukhyaḥ kavara-rasanāgranthayaḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo
gāyantyas taṁ taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ

With feet performing dance steps on the ground, with hands gesturing, with smiles and movements of their brows, with their braids and belts tied tight, their waists bending, their faces perspiring, the garments on their breasts moving this way and that, and their earrings swinging on their cheeks, Kṛṣṇa's young consorts, singing, shone like streaks of lightning in a mass of clouds.

COMMENTARY: Not only did he become more beautiful with the *gopīs*, but they also became more beautiful in association with him. They stepped on the ground using dance steps (*pāda-nyāsaiḥ*). They made various gestures with their hands. Though they could not gesture because their arms were locked together in the circle, they would gesture with two hands joined together, or sometimes they released their hands to make the gestures. Or interrupting certain dance steps they could gesture though their arms had been bound together. Skillful dancing employs smiling and moving the brows. Their waists were thin by nature, but by the transformation of dancing, they seemed to break in the middle.

Or when Kṛṣṇa stood up, they again took all the clothes they had laid on the ground for him to sit upon (*cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ*). The golden women who had taken complete shelter (*vadhvaḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa, dark blue, sang. The example of the cloud with lightning hints at this. Or they were the dearest (*vadhvaḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa. Their similarity to Kṛṣṇa in skill and bewilderment in *prema* was suitable. They sang about him. Parāśara describes this:

kṛṣṇaḥ śarac-candramasaṁ kaumudīṁ kumudākaram
jagau gopījanas tv ekaṁ kṛṣṇa-nāma punaḥ punaḥ

Kṛṣṇa is the autumn moon, the moonlight, and a lotus. The *gopīs* sang one name of Kṛṣṇa repeatedly. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

They shone brilliantly (*virejuḥ*). The skill in dancing with intoxication and *prema* of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* mixed together. His powers and his human

nature becoming one produced the brilliance. The image of lightning suggests that, by their mutual beauty, his beauty increased.

The *megha-cakra* (circle of clouds) suggests that by his skill in dancing or by his special power, he became many. Or it means a group of clouds. Without being black, the beauty would not be produced. After he reached the peak of beauty, they became most beautiful. The *rāsa* dance became most astonishing because of the wealth of excellent beauty of the women who had reached the height of beauty.

Text 33.8

uccair jagur nṛtyamānā rakta-kaṇṭhyo rati-priyāḥ
kṛṣṇābhimarśa-muditā yad-gītenedam āvṛtam

Their throats impassioned to please their lover, the gopīs sang loudly while they danced, overjoyed by Kṛṣṇa's touch. This singing spread throughout the entire universe.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having described the prominent position of the *gopīs*' dancing because of great joy, now the prominence of singing is described. While dancing, they sang. This shows their skill in dancing since they could also sing at the same time. The goal of singing and dancing was Kṛṣṇa's pleasure (*rati-priyāḥ*). One should not fear that they would become tired by singing and dancing for they were overjoyed by the touch of Kṛṣṇa. That was the only cause of their dancing. Their singing was so loud that it spread over the universe. Or, the universe became filled with their spontaneous *rāgas,* which made the universe prone to sing as well. The scriptures on music say that the *gopīs*' *rāgas* numbers sixteen thousand. *Saṅgīta-sāra* says

tāvanta eva rāgāḥ syur yāvatyo jīva-jātayaḥ
teṣu ṣoḍaśa-sāhasrī purā gopī-kṛtā varā

There are as many musical *rāgas* as there are species of life. Among these *rāgas* sixteen thousand principal ones were performed by the *gopīs* previously.

Or, the *gopīs* were respected by Kṛṣṇa because of their dancing (*nṛtyamānāḥ*). Their throats were smeared with *prema* (*rakta-kaṇṭhyaḥ*). This indicates the great sweetness of their singing. The cause of the loud singing was their affection for Kṛṣṇa (*rati-priyāḥ*), whose other name is Rati. They sang loudly because of Kṛṣṇa's loud singing. Parāśara says:

rāsa-geyaṁ jagau kṛṣṇo yāvat vyāyata-dhvaniḥ
sādhu kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti tāvat tad dviguṇaṁ jaguḥ

When Kṛṣṇa sang at the *rāsa* dance the *gopīs* sang twice as loud, saying "Kṛṣṇa sings well. Kṛṣṇa sings well." *Visṇu Purāṇa*

The reasons for their singing loudly are three: their voices were filled with *prema*, they were affectionate to him, and they were joyful with Kṛṣṇa's touch. The related causes should be understood. Just as Kṛṣṇa became more beautiful because of the *gopīs* and the *gopīs* became more beautiful because of Kṛṣṇa, so the qualities of their singing and dancing became more attractive by Kṛṣṇa's singing and dancing. This will be clear in later verses.

Text 33.9

kācit samaṁ mukundena svara-jātīr amiśritāḥ
unninye pūjitā tena prīyatā sādhu sādhv iti
tad eva dhruvam unninye tasyai mānaṁ ca bahv adāt

One gopī, joining Mukunda in his singing, sang pure melodious tones that rose harmoniously above his voice. Kṛṣṇa was pleased and showed great appreciation for her performance, saying "Excellent! Excellent!" When another gopī sang in the dhruva style, Kṛṣṇa praised her even more.

COMMENTARY: The activities of the *gopīs* in *prema* are now described individually by taking the chief among the *gopīs*, as was done previously, in five and a half verses (9-14). One *gopī* followed after Kṛṣṇa (*mukunda-samam*), singing in an excellent way (*un-ninye*). *Unninye* means she composed the song excellently or embellished it. She followed his singing because he was the giver of the highest bliss (*mukunda*). And by this singing he gave the highest bliss to the universe. She was worshiped by Kṛṣṇa because, though she sang with him, she also composed the melody independently. He worshipped her by praising her. He said, "Very good!

Very good!" He repeated his words out of joy or to emphasize her excellence.

Though she sang with Kṛṣṇa, her outstanding delivery of notes made them appear separately (*amiśritāḥ*). *Amiśritāḥ* also means pure.

jātayo 'ṣṭadaśa proktās tāsāṁ lakṣaṇam ucyate
śuddhāḥ syuḥ jātayaḥ sapta tāḥ ṣaḍjādi-svarābhidhāḥ
tā eva vikṛtāḥ satyo jātā vikṛta-saṁjñitāḥ

There are eighteen *jātis.* Their qualities are described. The pure *jātis* are the seven

notes of the scale. When these are transformed, they are called *vikṛta*. (*Saṅgīta-sāgara*)

ṣāḍjārṣabhī ca gāndhārī madhyamā pāñcamī tathā
dhaivatī cātha naiṣādī śuddhā etās tu jātayaḥ

The pure *jātis* are *ṣaḍja, ṛsabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, pañcamī, dhaivata, and niṣadī.*

Another *gopī* sang. She was worshipped even more than the previous *gopī*. This indicates her skill in singing.

Text 33.10

kācid rāsa-pariśrāntā pārśva-sthasya gadā-bhṛtaḥ
jagrāha bāhunā skandhaṁ ślathad-valaya-mallikā

When one gopī grew tired from the rāsa dance, she turned to Kṛṣṇa, standing at her side, and grasped his shoulder with her arm. The dancing had loosened her bracelets and the flowers in her hair.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having shown *prema* manifest through song, displaying degrees of the prominence of qualities in some *gopīs*, Śukadeva now shows the excellence of some *gopīs* with the predominance of desire for enjoyment. One of them has a prominence of good fortune. That is described in this verse.

Kṛṣṇa was standing by her side. This shows that she received comfort immediately from him. If he did not, she would fall over because of

absorption in the *rāsa* dance. He held a staff in his hand, suitable for the master of the dance (*gadā-bhṛtaḥ*). Or, he suitably held the flute, which makes sounds (*nigadati-* from *gada*). Though he was between pairs of *gopīs*, he also had a form which appeared as the master of the dance. The characteristics of her fatigue are described. Her bracelets rubbed together and became loose, like jasmines garlands falling off, and the jasmines in her braids became loose. Parāśara says:

parivarta-śrameṇaikā calad-valaya-lāpinīm
dadau bāhu-latāṁ skandhe gopī madhu-nighātinaḥ

One *gopī,* becoming tired, placed her arm jingling with bracelets on the shoulder of Kṛṣṇa. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

In Paraśāra's description it should be understood that her jasmine garlands also became loose. Among the ten *anubhāvas* such as *śobha*, this is called *mādhurya. Mādhuryaṁ nāma ceṣṭānāṁsarvāvasthāsu cārutā: mādhuryam* means the beauty of actions in all circumstances. *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 11.19

This verse also shows that she was an independent *gopī* (*svādhīna-bhartṛkā*) situated in the middle.[2] Thus she is Rādhā. The two *gopīs* described in the previous verse who gave pleasure to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by their singing were Lalitā and Viśākhā. The description in the present verse is similar to that in SB 10.32.6. The description of the qualities of the two singers shows that they were assistants.

Text 33.11

tatraikāṁsa-gataṁ bāhuṁ kṛṣṇasyotpala-saurabham
candanāliptam āghrāya hṛṣṭa-romā cucumba ha

Upon the shoulder of one gopī Kṛṣṇa placed his arm, whose natural blue-lotus fragrance was mixed with that of the sandalwood pulp anointing it. As the gopī relished that fragrance, her bodily hair stood on end in jubilation, and she kissed his arm.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse indicates Śyāmalā's actions by similarity to the *gopī's* actions in SB 10.32.4: another placed his arm, anointed with sandalwood paste, on

her shoulder. Kṛṣṇa's arm had by its nature a fragrance superior to that of a lotus. Additionally, it was decorated with sandalwood patterns. *Ha* means "clearly." The cause of her kissing Kṛṣṇa was her *prema* which made her hairs stand on end. Or, taking the literal meaning, her hairs were joyous *(hṛṣṭa*), what to speak of herself. This is the *anubhāva* called *prāgalbhya. Niḥśaṅkatvaṁ prayogeṣu budhair uktā pragalbhatā: pragalbhatā* refers to fearlessness in amorous actions. (*Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 11.21)

Text 33.12

kasyāścin nāṭya-vikṣipta kuṇḍala-tviṣa-maṇḍitam
gaṇḍaṁ gaṇḍe sandadhatyāḥ prādāt tāmbūla-carvitam

Next to Kṛṣṇa's cheek one gopī put her own, beautified by the effulgence of her earrings, which glittered as she danced. Kṛṣṇa then carefully gave her the betel-nut he was chewing.

COMMENTARY: The genitive case (*sandadhatyāḥ*) is used for the dative (he gave to the *gopī* who had placed her cheek on his). She did this on the pretext of fatigue. He put in her mouth from his mouth, his chewed betel with great love (*pra-adāt*).

Text 33.13

nṛtyatī gāyatī kācit kūjan nūpura-mekhalā
pārśva-sthācyuta-hastābjaṁ śrāntādhāt stanayoḥ śivam

Another gopī, with the bells on her ankles and waist tinkling, became fatigued as she danced and sang. Another placed upon her breasts the comforting lotus hand of Acyuta, who was standing by her side.

COMMENTARY: One danced and one sang. Her ankle bells and belt kept beat, following her singing. One *gopī* took the hand of the Lord who was definitely (*acyutasya*) situated at her side, whose hand gave relief from fatigue like a lotus and was the very form of happiness (*śivam*). The chief seven *gopīs* have been described. The eighth is described as follows:

kācit pravilasad bāhuṁ parirabhya cucuṁba tam
gopī gīta-stuti-vyājān nipuṇā madhusūdanam

One *gopī* embraced Kṛṣṇa's shining arm and kissed him. She was skillful at singing praises. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

Or *nṛtyatī gāyatī* refers to one *gopī*. Thus there are six. They are in order of increasing excellence. The six in order are more and more excellent. Two, Rādhā and Lalitā, were on either side of Kṛṣṇa who was in the center. Thus they are not mentioned. The circle is described. Or according to the previous description seven *gopīs* are mentioned. Rādhā was on his left side in the center, so is not mentioned.

Text 33.14

gopyo labdhvācyutaṁ kāntaṁ
śriya ekānta-vallabham
gṛhīta-kaṇṭhyas tad-dorbhyāṁ
gāyantyas tam vijahrire

Having attained as their intimate lover Acyuta, the exclusive consort of the goddess of fortune, the gopīs enjoyed great pleasure. They sang his glories as he held their necks with his arms.

COMMENTARY: The *gopīs* had attained Acyuta, their lover, who does not fail to manifest greatness in his form and qualities. His rareness is described. Lakṣmī holds him dear (*vallabham*). Or they attained Acyuta, the lover of Lakṣmī and their only dear one (*vallabham*). Having attained him, they were considered greater than Lakṣmī. That is shown in the second line. Uddhava says:

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

When Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation? (SB 10.47.60)

Text 33.15

karṇotpalālaka-viṭaṅka-kapola-gharma-
vaktra-śriyo valaya-nūpura-ghoṣa-vādyaiḥ
gopyaḥ samaṁ bhagavatā nanṛtuḥ sva-keśa-
srasta-srajo bhramara-gāyaka-rāsa-goṣṭhyām

The beauty of the gopīs' faces was enhanced by the lotus flowers behind their ears with locks of hair and drops of perspiration decorating their cheeks. With their armlets and ankle bells making a loud musical sound, with their chaplets scattered, the gopīs danced with their sweet lover in the arena of the rāsa dance as swarms of bees sang in accompaniment.

COMMENTARY: Their greatness is shown in two verses (15-16). Though they became tired from dancing, they became most beautiful. The reason for dancing is described. Since Kṛṣṇa displayed the highest essence of his unlimited sweetness (*bhagavatā*), they developed the highest bliss with him, since the *gopīs* were famous for being controlled by love for Kṛṣṇa alone. Being with him, they also displayed similar beauty and other qualities. And like them, he wore ornaments such as lotuses in his ears.

Śrīdhara Svāmī says that at this time the musicians from the heavenly planets also played drums suitable for the occasion. He also includes Kinnaras since "inhabitants of the sky" were mentioned in verse 4. Or this verse shows what was previously mentioned: that they were superior to Lakṣmī. Or previously the male Gandharvas had sung. Now at the beginning of the dance, they did not depend on others for singing and instruments. Or previously the songs of the Gandharvas and the music from their bangles were described. Now, even without that singing or sound of the bangles they danced. *Valaya-nūpura-ghoṣa-vādyaiḥ* can be taken as a negative: *avalaya-nūpura-ghoṣa-vādyaiḥ*. This is because, absorbed in the dance, they would deviate from the music. Thus even the bees did not hum at this time (*abhramara-gāyaka*). The garlands in their hair scattered because their hair worshipped his feet by scattering the flowers.

Text 33.16

evaṁ pariṣvaṅga-karābhimarśa-
snigdhekṣaṇoddāma-vilāsa-hāsaiḥ

reme rameśo vraja-sundarībhir
yathārbhakaḥ sva-pratibimba-vibhramaḥ

In this way Kṛṣṇa, though he is the master of Lakṣmī, took pleasure in the company of the young women of Vraja by embracing them, caressing them and glancing lovingly at them as he smiled playfully, while acting boldly, as a child plays with his reflection.

COMMENTARY: He embraced them and took their hands (*karābhimarśa*). Or he touched their breasts with his hands. He glanced at their faces with relish. Their clothing became loose (*uddāma-vilāsa*). He smiled with great love. He was the lord of Lakṣmī (*rameśaḥ*): although he was her lord, she was not qualified for the *rati* displayed at this time, but the *gopīs* were qualified (*vraja-sundarībhiḥ*). They were superior to Lakṣmī in *bhāva* and skills. An example is given to show that Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* were equal.

As a boy is not dissimilar from his reflection, so Kṛṣṇa was not dissimilar from the *gopīs*. Just as the playing boy moves his hand, so his reflected hand moves. And as the reflection moves, the boy imitates that action (so he believes, since he is a child.) Just as the Lord enjoyed, so the *gopīs* enjoyed. This indicates the beauty of the Lord's *rati.* That beauty could not be accomplished if there were irregularities. When they underwent transformations of *prema*, he also underwent similar transformations.

gopī-kapola-saṁśleṣam abhipatya harer bhujau
pulakodgama-śaṣpāya svedāmbu-ghanatāṁ gatau

When Kṛṣṇa's arms contacted the cheek of a *gopī*, those arms began profusly perspiring, and their hairs stood on end like grass. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

Or just as a boy absorbed in playing with his reflection does not know anything else, and enjoys, so the Lord absorbed in the dance did not know anything else. Or he enjoyed with the *gopīs* by their embraces as described. He embraced similarly. He enjoyed their embraces. He imitated what they did. This shows that they were greater than him.

Text 33.17

tad-aṅga-saṅga-pramudākulendriyāḥ
keśān dukūlaṁ kuca-paṭṭikāṁ vā

nāñjaḥ prativyoḍhum alaṁ vraja-striyo
visrasta-mālābharaṇāḥ kurūdvaha

O hero of the Kuru dynasty! Their senses overwhelmed by the joy of having his physical association, the gopīs could not prevent their hair, their dresses and the cloths covering their breasts from becoming disheveled. Their garlands and ornaments loosened.

COMMENTARY: Because the *gopīs*' lost control from intense joy, the *rāsa* dance slackened. Because of the great joy of associating with his limbs, their senses became confused. The symptoms are described: their hair, linen garments, and their upper cloth or their bodices or both became disarrayed. This was suitable because they were especially endowed with great *prema* (*vraja-striyaḥ*). This shows their great bliss. That is also indicated by the prefix *pra* in *pramuda.* You can understand this, O hero of the Kurus. Or the Kuru dynasty is most fortunate, since you have a *bhāva* similar to the *gopīs' bhāva* which made them most successful.

Text 33.18

kṛṣṇa-vikrīḍitaṁ vīkṣya mumuhuḥ khe-cara-striyaḥ
kāmārditāḥ śaśāṅkaś ca sa-gaṇo vismito 'bhavat

The wives of the devatās, observing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, were bewildered and became agitated with desire. The moon and his entourage of stars became astonished.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa who is completely filled with the highest bliss, or who attracts all hearts, seeing pastimes which were more extraordinary than previous ones (*vi-krīḍitam*), seeing with affection or directly with service (*vīkṣya*), pastimes which became identical to he who plays (*kṛṣṇa*), all the wives of the *devatās*, afflicted by desire for the Lord, became bewildered, forgetting everything. First, not considering their qualification for attaining Kṛṣṇa, they attained a special state of bewilderment. Along with the moon and stars they became astonished, because they had never seen such an event.

Śrīdhara Svāmī mentioned that they played in the long nights at their will. If the nights were not long, the pastimes filled with profuse joy could not be accomplished. Later it will be said that the dance lasted till the *brahma-*

rātra (verse 38). Some explain that this means a night of Brahmā, lasting a thousand cycles of four *yugas*. That is possible since unlimited contradictory conditions can be accomplished by the Lord's *śaktis.* Śrīdhara Svāmī used the plural (nights), since verse 25 says "the Lord took advantage of all those moonlit autumn nights" and SB 10.29.1 says "upon seeing those autumn nights."

Or the *devatā* men and women were bewildered. *Sa-gaṇaḥ* means "with moon's wives (27 constellations) and the other stars." The moon and the stars also became filled with desire and became bewildered (*ca*). Because they were all bewildered, they were not restricted with shyness by the loving exchanges which will be described. The moon developed a desire for the

Lord, though not of the same sort as the *gopīs* (since he was a male). Or like the sages at Daṇḍakārāṇya, he also developed a conjugal mood. He does not have a fault in desiring Kṛṣṇa who appeared in his dynasty. This is suggested by the word *śaśa* (rabbit). The moon is not a fault for being marked with a sign of a rabbit. Actually it is a good quality.

This indicates that the *rāsa* dance was most attractive because it increased *bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa. It was thus superior to all other pastimes since it increased love for the Lord by its elements like singing and dancing, and even it was undertaken by the Lord himself. It was undertaken with the *gopīs*, in this particular manner. It could not be accomplished with *devatā* woman or with wives like Lakṣmī endowed with reverence, or with other women, who were not qualified to kiss the Lord. It could only be accomplished with the *gopīs*, most highly qualified with special *rati,* endowed with special pure *prema*. The highest goal can only be accomplished using the finest setting. Thus Kṛṣṇa, accomplished at this place the *rāsa* dance for the *rasa* of pure enjoyment. Thus it was said *tatrārabhata govindaḥ strī-ratnaiḥ*: there Kṛṣṇa began the *rāsa* dance with the best of women. (SB 10.33.2)

Text 33.19

kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ yāvatīr gopa-yoṣitaḥ
reme sa bhagavāṁs tābhir ātmārāmo 'pi līlayā

Expanding himself as many times as there were cowherd women to associate with, the Supreme Lord, though self-satisfied, playfully enjoyed their company.

COMMENTARY: Two verses (19-20) describe the ultimate goal. By his special powers, he expanded himself for each *gopī*. Some were married (*gopa-yoṣitaḥ*). Some were unmarried daughters of cowherds. Or they were all wives of cowherds—some were married to cowherds and some regarded themselves as married to Kṛṣṇa by dedicating themselves to him in the Kātyāyanī vrata. This is explained by the great devotee (Rūpa Gosvāṁī) in *Lalita-mādhava* and other plays.

The Lord, who manifested the essence of his qualities (*bhagavān*), enjoyed with conjugal *rasa* (*līlayā*) or with various amorous activities. He distributed special *prema* himself, attracting the hearts of everyone in the universe, since he was composed of the special pastimes of the highest *prema-rasa*. That is revealed later and also explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.* Though he was an *ātmārāma,* he enjoyed. Both these qualities were displayed separately in the nearby bowers. Or in the *rāsa* dance, his *ātmārāma* nature was concealed. His nature as the Lord and as sweetness is indicated by this statement.

Text 33.20

tāsāṁ rati-vihāreṇa śrāntānāṁ vadanāni saḥ
prāmṛjat karuṇaḥ premṇā śantamenāṅga pāṇinā

Seeing that the gopīs were fatigued from conjugal enjoyment, my dear King, merciful Kṛṣṇa lovingly wiped their faces with his comforting hand.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They became fatigued by various playful activities befitting the *anurāga* of couples. Another version has *ati-vihāreṇa*, with the same meaning. He excellently wiped (*pra-āmṛjat*) their faces with his hand composed of the highest bliss, which alleviated their fatigue. Wiping the perspiration and dressing their hair, he made them shine since he was most merciful (*karuṇaḥ*), unable to tolerate others' suffering. This was not ordinary mercy, since he wiped their faces because of *prema*. This shows their

special nature. *Prema* or great affection arose in his heart because of their good qualities, since they took him alone as the object of possessiveness. This *prema* became intense at this time, and included mercy. Just by his touch he can relieve them, since his hand is the embodiment of all happiness. In this case, he not only touched them but wiped their faces, and moreover, did this with *prema*. Thus the hand not only relieved them of fatigue, but produced the highest satisfaction. Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit in *prema* (*aṅga*).

Text 33.21

gopyaḥ sphurat-puraṭa-kuṇḍala-kuntala-tviḍ-
gaṇḍa-śriyā sudhita-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇena
mānaṁ dadhatya ṛṣabhasya jaguḥ kṛtāni
puṇyāni tat-kara-ruha-sparśa-pramodāḥ

The gopīs honored their hero with smiling glances sweetened by the beauty of their cheeks and the effulgence of their curly locks and glittering golden earrings. Overjoyed from the touch of his fingernails, they chanted the glories of the all-auspicious pastimes of their husband.

COMMENTARY: The overjoyed *gopīs* produced joy in Kṛṣṇa in three ways: by their beauty (their effulgent cheeks), their emotions (smiling glances) and by glorifying him (they sang about his activities). *Ṛṣabhasya* means the best male, indicating his great skill in love. It reached perfection with them. They thus respected him in the ways described (*mānaṁ dadhatya*). Or he thought, "I am fortunate to have wives like you." They offered respect to this manifestation of pride (*mānam*). That is shown.

They sang about his pure or joy-filled activities, at the present time, or in the past, because of the touch of his fingernails. Though tired from acts of love, they became eager for *rasa* through singing. Thus, they were joyful (*pra-modāḥ*). The beauty of their cheeks could also be created by his wiping their cheeks.

Text 33.22

tābhir yutaḥ śramam apohitum aṅga-saṅga-
ghṛṣṭa-srajaḥ sva-kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ

gandharva-pālibhir anudruta āviśad vāḥ
śrānto gajībhir ibha-rāḍ iva bhinna-setuḥ

Kṛṣṇa's garland had been crushed during his conjugal dalliance with the gopīs and colored red by the kuṅkuma powder on their breasts. To dispel the fatigue of the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa entered the water of the Yamunā, followed swiftly by bees who were singing like the best of the Gandharvas. He appeared like a lordly elephant entering the water to relax in the company of his consorts, as if breaking the dikes in a paddy field.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Three verses (22-24) describe the activities in prema when the Lord was overjoyed. Because of the special qualities of their pastimes in prema, the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa became fatigued. The garland crushed by contact with the gopīs became more fragrant because of the natural fragrance of their limbs. The word sva in sva-kuca (their own breasts) indicates the extraordinary nature of their breasts. Thus the bees pursued the garland. The garland was made of jasmine flowers. It appeared beautiful with its whiteness being stained by the red kuṅkuma. It acted as an uddīpana of desire in their water sports.

He entered the water of the Yamunā (vāḥ) along with them. An example is given. He entered with attraction for the water just as an elephant enters the water out of attachment with his many female elephants. He was followed by bees singing like leaders of the Gandharvas (gandharva-pā). Or gandarva-pā can mean the best of singers. He was followed by the bees which were the best of singers. Gandharva can mean a singer according to the Viśva-prakāśa. This produced the best singing suitable for water sports.

Or, with whom did he entered the water? The gopīs, wearing garlands crushed by association with Kṛṣṇa, had kuṁkuma from their breasts spread over their bodies by absorption in amorous play. With them he entered the water in order to alleviate his fatigue as well as theirs. The cause of their fatigue is mentioned as a separate topic. They had performed bold pastimes (bhinna-setur iva). Instead of sva-kuca sometimes sa kuca is seen. That is accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī. Saḥ refers to Kṛṣṇa. He does not refer to sva in his commentary.

Text 33.23

so 'mbhasy alaṁ yuvatibhiḥ pariṣicyamānaḥ
premṇekṣitaḥ prahasatībhir itas tato 'ṅga
vaimānikaiḥ kusuma-varṣibhir īdyamāno
reme svayaṁ sva-ratir atra gajendra-līlaḥ

My dear King, in the water Kṛṣṇa was splashed on all sides by the laughing gopīs, who looked at him with love. As the devatās worshiped him by showering flowers from their airplanes, the self-satisfied Lord took pleasure in playing like the king of the elephants.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was sprinkled with water by the young women (*yuvatibhiḥ*), who were expert at this, absorbed in the *rasa* of playing in the water. He was sprinkled with water, in the water, from all directions (*itas tataḥ*), even though they looked at him with *prema*. *Premṇekṣitaḥ* (showered with *prema*) is another version. This indicates that internally and externally he was absorbed in that play. The *gopīs* laughed loudly because of *hāsya-rasa*, while he enjoyed (*reme*). They also were internally and externally absorbed in this play. In this way he enjoyed within himself (*sva-ratiḥ*).

"How is this described?" He was like the king of the elephants in his pastimes, a person whose pastimes are full of power. "How is this described?" He was praised with showers of flowers from airplanes. This means he had evident, supreme glory to be praised at all times everywhere. This phrase cannot be explained otherwise, because the *devatās* were not qualified for this pastime. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in joy (*aṅga*). Or, *sva-ratiḥ* can mean "he had attachment for his own *gopīs* (*sva*)." Thus, even if he was victorious in the games, they were satisfied with his victory. Or, "Please describe the water pastimes in detail." He had extraordinary (*sva)* pastimes (*ratiḥ*). The pastimes are impossible to describe without giving an example.

Text 33.24

tataś ca kṛṣṇopavane jala-sthala
prasūna-gandhānila-juṣṭa-dik-taṭe

cacāra bhṛṅga-pramadā-gaṇāvṛto
yathā mada-cyud dviradaḥ kareṇubhiḥ

Then the Lord strolled through a small forest on the bank of the Yamunā. This forest was filled to its limits with breezes carrying the fragrances of all the flowers growing on the land and in the water. Followed by his entourage of bees and beautiful women, Kṛṣṇa appeared like an elephant flowing with mada in the company of she-elephants.

COMMENTARY: After playing in the water (*tataḥ*), he strolled in the forest to pick flowers, since the flowers and garlands had withered during the water pastimes. The word *ca* means *tu* in this verse. It indicates a new topic. The directions were served gently by the breeze carrying the perfumes of lotuses and land flowers like jasmine and *kunda*. This made the breeze cool and fragrant.

He wandered about picking flowers, hiding in the groves and playing in various ways. The bees came along with the flowers when he picked them or were attracted to the naturally sweet fragrance of his limbs cleansed by the water pastimes. Or the bees always were attracted because the bees served as *uddīpanas* as their natures. Or they were always attracted to the fragrance from his forest garland and face. Thus they are always described. The bees were attracted to him just as they are attracted to an elephant with sweet juice oozing from his temples in rutting season.

Kṛṣṇa is compared to the elephant because of its excellence and its attachment to the she-elephants. And the she-elephants are similarly attached to the male. All this is suggested in the comparison. There is a mutual affection between the male and female elephants as the elephant with intensified desire independently plays with them. Or he was surrounded by the women (*pramadā*) who were fickle like bees. This indicates their intoxication in *prema*. *Pramadā* means filled with joy.

Text 33.25

evaṁ śaśāṅkāṁśu-virājitā niśāḥ
sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ
siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-sauratāḥ
sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ

With gopīs firmly attached to him with anurāga, Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always pure, who had fixed in his mind enjoyment with them, served the nights lit by the rays of the moon—all the nights which give shelter to poetic topics or rasa in autumn.

COMMENTARY: The pastimes of the *rāsa* dance on that night have been described. Gathering together, other pastimes not mentioned during that night, it is now indicated in summary that this night represented many nights.

Evam means "in this way." It means that other pastimes took place on that night as well. Because they are so many, it is impossible to describe them. 'Nights' is in the plural. This indicates that he performed the *rāsa* dance on all nights during his full *kaiśora* period. This is stated by Parāśara in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa.* The word *saḥ* indicates he was of *kaiśora* age.

kaumāraṁ pañcamābdāntaṁ paugaṇḍaṁ daśamāvadhi
ā-ṣoḍaśāc ca kaiśoraṁ yauvanaṁ syāt tataḥ param

The *kaumāra* stage lasts until the age of five, *paugaṇḍa* up to age ten and *kaiśora* to age fifteen. From then on, one is known as *yauvana*. (*Bhakti-rasmāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.309)

According to this, *kaiśora* lasts from eleven to fifteen years. It should be understood that *kaiśora* continues eternally in Gokula. Uddhava says:

tato nanda-vrajam itaḥ pitrā kaṁsād vibibhyatā
ekādaśa samās tatra gūḍhārciḥ sa-balo 'vasat

His father, afraid of Kaṁsa, brought him to Vraja and for eleven years he lived there with Balarāma, like a covered flame. (SB 3.2.26)

In *kaumara* and *paugaṇḍa* ages which are unsuitable, the *rāsa* dance does not arise. In those periods, Kṛṣṇa's powers are hidden, since he does not manifest his special qualities as Bhagavān. Thus it is said he was like a covered flame. Kṛṣṇa says to Nanda in Mathurā:

nāsmatto yuvayos tāta nityotkaṇṭhitayor api
bālya-paugaṇḍa-kaiśorāḥ putrābhyām abhavan kvacit

Dear Father, because of us, your two sons, you and mother Devakī always remained in anxiety and could never enjoy our *bālya*, *paugaṇḍa* or *kaiśora.* (SB 10.45.2)

Some people think that his Gokula *rāsa* pastimes continued into the *yauvana* period according to descriptions like the following when he entered Mathurā:

manāṁsi tāsām aravinda-locanaḥ
pragalbha-līlā-hasitāvalokaiḥ
jahāra matta-dviradendra-vikramo
dṛśāṁ dadac chrī-ramaṇātmanotsavam

The lotus-eyed Lord, walking with the gait of a lordly elephant in rut, creating joy for their eyes with his body, which is the source of pleasure for the divine goddess of fortune, captivated those ladies' minds with playful, bold, smiling glances. (SB 10.41.27)

But this is not so proper. This is contradicted by the following statements. Akrūra describes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as *kiśorau śyāmala-śvetau*: two boys of *kaiśora* age, one black and the other white. (SB 10.38.29) *Kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau*: the two boys of *kaiśora* age have not reached *yauvana* period. (SB 10.44.8)

The word *evam* indicates that similar pastimes took place on other nights. All the pastimes recurred as if newly performed, without thinking that the dance and the questions and answers before the dance had happened previously, because of the flow of the highest *prema*.

Śaśāṅka (marked with the figure of a rabbit) in the verse means the full moon since the mark resembling the rabbit was completely recognizable. The rays shone brightly (*vi-rājitā*), as if it were day. For the *rāsa* dance, on all those nights the moon appeared full, as if it were the full moon day.

evaṁ sa kṛṣṇo gopīnāṁ cakravālair alaṅkṛtaḥ
śāradīṣu sacandrāsu niśāsu mumude sukhī

Thus Kṛṣṇa, ornamented with circles of *gopīs*, enjoyed happily in the moon lit nights of the autumn season. (*Hari-vaṁśa*)

Though the autumn season is mentioned in the above verse (*śaradīṣu*), it represents nights of other seasons as well. Or it means he enjoyed even in the autumn season. Or the verse indicates the dance in another *kalpa* when it only occurred in the autumn, just as in other *kalpas* Vasudeva exchanges the sons in Mathurā, not in Nanda's house.

“How was it possible to every day perform the dance in a similar way with similar nights?” Kṛṣṇa’s every desire was fulfilled (*satya-kāmaḥ*).

“It would be very rare that the *gopīs* came, since they were controlled by their husbands and had anger.” He was continuously attached (*anurata*), or strongly attached, or related in all ways to the *gopīs* who had surrendered completely to him (*abalā-gaṇaḥ*).

Or “How could they daily meet him. They were not independent, because of husbands?” They were completely attached only to him at all times, ignoring everyone else. Or because they were equally attached to each other, somewhere, at some time, somehow, they would meet. This is not impossible for him.

“He is the great attractor, the taster of the *rāsa* dance. And for no reason, at no time, can he be fully satisfied.” That is true. But he is controlled by *prema*. He has accepted (*avaruddha*)

all acts of love or the most intense pastimes (*surata*), since he has appeared as *avatāra* for this purpose. He gave enjoyment to the *gopīs* without indifference, and with inner determination (*ātmani*). He experienced everything personally with great attachment, by accepting them within himself. Or he experienced the highest bliss by ignoring his feature as *ātmārāma.*

Not only did he perform the *rāsa* dance as described, but he expressed various types of love in various ways with them. He served those nights throughout the year, in which there are seasons, months, and days, or in the autumn which is beautiful with banks, when desire is strong, which are described in poetry. He acted with great affection for that purpose. The reference to poetry means works like *Gīta-govinda* and *Vidagdha-mādhava.*

Or in this way he served (enjoyed) the *rāsa* dance on those nights. Now, during the day also, he performed similar pastimes. That is indicated by the word *sarvā* (all). He served pastimes in the autumn or during the year, which are described with great variety and he served all others as well. These other pastimes are famous in *Gīta-govinda*, and as well include the tax and boat pastimes described by Candidāsa.

Text 33.26

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca
saṁsthāpanāya dharmasya praśamāyetarasya ca
avatīrṇo hi bhagavān aṁśena jagad-īśvaraḥ

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O brāhmaṇa, though full of all powers, the lord of the universe, he has descended to this earth along with Balarāma to destroy adharma and reestablish dharma.

COMMENTARY: Hearing, with great attention, Śukadeva as he described the *rāsa* dance with affection and considering some devotees and dry logicians who were slightly smiling and glancing while squinting their eyes, Parīkṣit asks a question as a doubt to mercifully benefit them. This continues for three verses (26-28).

The Lord appears in order to reestablish lost dharma, or protect what is current. Not only that, he comes in order to uproot *adharma* with all its subtle desires. Otherwise, establishing dharma would be incomplete. The word *hi* indicates that this is well known. It is said *dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge:* I appear in every *yuga* to establish dharma. (BG 4.8) As Bhagavān, manifesting his nature as the Lord, he appears with Balarāma. This shows his zeal. He does this since he is the protector of the universe. Otherwise, the universe would be destroyed. Or, he is lord of the universe, the protector. Or the Lord appears in this world to destroy completely the establishment of unlimited dharmas contrary to *bhakti*, since his purpose as *avatāra* is accomplished by performing the *rāsa* dance, which is without such dharmas.

"But he will then contradict the Vedas, created by himself." He is the lord of the universe, of Brahmā and others. He is completely independent. For accomplishing his *rasa*, sometimes he will do such things. He has no controller.

Or according to the following, *dharma* means what causes *bhakti*:

dharmo mad-bhakti-kṛt prokto jñānaṁ caikātmya-darśanam
guṇesv asaṅgo vairāgyam aiśvaryaṁ cāṇimādayaḥ

Dharma means what produces *bhakti.* Real *jñāna* is seeing Paramātmā everywhere. Real *vairāgya* is complete disinterest in sense objects. Real

aiśvarya is the acquisition of the *siddhis.* (SB 11.19.27)

Thus, the Lord appears to establish *bhakti* and destroy what is unfavorable to *bhakti*, such as liberation, because he is the protector of the universe. Everyone's happiness is established by establishing *bhakti*.

Text 33.27

sa kathaṁ dharma-setūnāṁ vaktā kartābhirakṣitā
pratīpam ācarad brahman para-dārābhimarśanam

He is the original speaker, follower and guardian of dharma. How, then, could he have violated it by touching other men's wives?

COMMENTARY: This verse should actually start with *yat* (who). He is the speaker of laws to protect the people or the speaker of rules concerning dharma mentioned in the Vedas. Since he is the speaker, he must also be the executor of the laws. People will not accept if there is a difference between his words and actions. He is the protector of the laws by increasing its popularity and destroying the opposition. Embracing another man's wife is contrary to the laws of dharma or unfavorable for the establishment of dharma (*pratīpam*). O *brahman,* the personification of the Vedas! By transgressing the Vedas with contrary acts, he transgresses *brāhmaṇas* like you. It is not suitable conduct for him since he respects the *brāhmaṇas*.

Or, "How can I know the reasons, since those are the actions of the Lord?" But you are the knower of all the Vedas (*brahman*), since you are omniscient. Or, he has done the opposite (*pratīpam*): he has spoken *adharma*, performed *adharma* and protected *adharma*. He himself states his enjoyment of others' wives. *Mayāparokṣaṁ bhajatā tirohitam*: even when I removed myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. (SB 10.32.21) He did it since he personally enjoyed them. He protected *adharma* since he did it repeatedly. Thus he encouraged others to do this. He has more fault than a person who simply sins without affecting others. Or, doing the opposite (*pratīpam*) he has really destroyed *dharma* and established *adharma*.

Or he did not violate them at all. "Why?" He is the speaker of the rules of *bhakti* (*dharma-setūnām*). In order to spread special *bhakti* which is his

chief goal as *avatāra*, it is suitable that he does not give respect to dharma. This is clear when he speaks about those who serve dharma:

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

One should perform one's daily and periodic rites (*nitya-naimittika karmas*) as long as one does not become detached from them or has not awakened his faith in hearing topics about me. (SB 11.20.9)

Or "though he is the speaker of the rules of dharma, why did he perform acts contrary?" By performing the *rāsa* dance and promoting the highest *bhakti*, he accomplished the dharma of attaining him alone. Touching the women who were most excellent by pure *bhakti* to him (*para*), his own women, was proper, to fulfill the desires of his devotees while ignoring all else, since the purpose of his *avatāra* was *bhakti*. Touching others' wives is a fault. These were his women, the best (*para*), his wives.

Text 33.28

āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ kṛtavān vai jugupsitam
kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ śaṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata

O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when he behaved so contemptibly.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

If he acts in this way, how can he be the leader of the Yadus who are the greatest followers of dharma? There is no other doubt. Parīkṣit says "we" to indicate many people in the assembly. The heart becomes disturbed by the fact that Kṛṣṇa was the crown jewel of good conduct and also the corrupter of scripture. O Śukadeva, fixed in *brahmacarya* (*suvrata*)! He acted contrary to your conduct. This conduct is condemned. Or, you are fixed in good conduct (*suvrata*) but if you cannot explain this, then good conduct that you and others follow will be destroyed.

There is another opposite meaning. He is the leader of the devotees (*yadu-patiḥ*). To give mercy to devotees, he sometimes transgresses dharma. "Did

he do condemned acts (*jugupsitam*)?" Never. He has done what is approved by the devotees. "Why?" He desired to spread his *prema* through the *rāsa* pastimes (*āpta-kāmaḥ*). By spreading *prema*, the highest result, he did not perform censured acts, but rather by the *rāsa* dance he satisfied all the devotees. There can be no doubt about this. Moving his folded hands, Parīkṣit asked Śukadeva to destroy the doubts of those assembled, including himself out of humility. He says destroy "generally (*prāya*)" since some persons present in the assembly—the devotees who know the conclusions of scripture and were inundated with *rasa*—had no doubts about the *rāsa* pastimes filled with *prema*. I ask for the benefit of the inattentive members of the assembly. This is not my doubt. Therefore cut the chains of their doubts so they no longer have fear (*abhi*), O Śukadeva, fixed in *bhakti* (*suvrata*)!

Text 33.29

śrī-śuka uvāca
dharma-vyatikramo dṛṣṭa īśvarāṇāṁ ca sāhasam
tejīyasāṁ na doṣāya vahneḥ sarva-bhujo yathā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The status of powerful controllers is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In seven verses (29-35), out of affection which is his nature, or out of affection for his disciple, Śukadeva rejects conclusions other than those presented by Parīkṣit through hidden meaning, while rejecting Parīkṣit's apparent words of criticism. One sees acts of *adharma* in persons who are not dependent on dharma (*īśvarāṇām*) such as Brahmā being attracted to his daughter, done without fear (*sāhasam*), or Bṛhaspati approaching the wife of Utathya (his elder brother). There is no fault in these powerful beings. An example is given. The fire burns everything but does not become impure.

Text 33.30

naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jaṁ viṣam

One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

But this is not so for others. One should not at all perform acts that transgress dharma which these powerful beings perform. The prefix *sam* in *samācaret* indicates forbiddance. One should not do at all, at any time (*jātu*), not even in the mind (*manasā*), what to speak of using words or performing the act! This is certain (*hi*). One is destroyed completely (*vi-naśyati*), with suffering in this life and the next, if one acts in this way, not knowing that one is not qualified with the powers of the great *īśvaras.* An example is given concerning foolishness as a cause in eating. If one were not foolish, one would not try to consume the poisonous ocean. One will immediately die from the intense poison of the *kālakūṭa*. Śiva however does not die but rather attains glory by showing his special power. Thus Śiva is famous for his blue throat.

Text 33.31

īśvarāṇāṁ vacaḥ satyaṁ tathaivācaritaṁ kvacit
teṣāṁ yat sva-vaco-yuktaṁ buddhimāṁs tat samācaret

The statements of the Lord's empowered servants are authoritative, and the acts they perform are exemplary when consistent with those statements. Therefore one who is intelligent should carry out their instructions.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

One should accept orders of *īśvaras* as authoritative (*satyam*). One should follow the acts that they perform which are not contrary to their instructions. That instruction becomes stronger because of the *īśvara's*

similar conduct. A person should deliberate on this (*buddhimān*) and then act. Otherwise he is unintelligent.

Text 33.32

kuśalācaritenaiṣām iha svārtho na vidyate
viparyayeṇa vānartho nirahaṅkāriṇāṁ prabho

O Parīkṣit, you can understand! When these great persons who are free from false ego act piously in this world, they have no selfish motives to fulfill, and even when they act in apparent contradiction to the laws of piety, they are not subject to sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Another version *has iha cārtho na vidyate:* there is no gain for the self in this world or the next (*ca*). The word *vā* indicates the same sentence structure as the previous statement. When they act in a contrary manner still there is no fault (the negative is understood). They are devoid of *ahaṅkāra*, with no contamination by the act. You are capable of understanding (*prabho*). Or, you are also in the category of *īśvara*. O lord (*prabho*)!

Text 33.33

kim utākhila-sattvānāṁ tiryaṅ-martya-divaukasām
īśituś ceśitavyānāṁ kuśalākuśalānvayaḥ

How, then, could the Lord of all created beings—animals, men and devatās—have any connection with the piety and impiety that affect his subjects?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

If this is so for these *īśvaras,* and they are devoid of fault since they are without *ahaṅkāra*, then what fault can there be in the Lord who has appeared to benefit these *īśvaras?* This is expressed with *kaimutika-nyāya.* Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all beings in *tamas, rajas* and *sattva* (animals, humans and *devatās*), who by their nature are to be controlled. He is the Lord of even liberated souls, since they are all dependent on the Lord

(*īśitavyānām*). The word *ca* means *tu* to show difference. How could the Lord have a connection with piety and impiety of these controlled beings? It does not exist. This is understood from the previous verse (*na vidyate*). He has no restrictions since he is the controller of all others. He is indeed the Supreme Lord. *Kim uta* means "excessively, strong, well" according to *Amara-koṣa.*

Text 33.34

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-parāga-niṣeva-tṛptā
yoga-prabhāva-vidhutākhila-karma-bandhāḥ
svairaṁ caranti munayo 'pi na nahyamānās
tasyecchayātta-vapuṣaḥ kuta eva bandhaḥ

The devotees, filled with prema, continually meditating on the particles of beauty emanating from his lotus feet, having destroyed all karma by the power of his bhakti-yoga, wander about performing actions without accruing bondage. So how could there be any question of bondage for the Lord himself, who assumes his forms according to his own sweet will?

COMMENTARY: The devotees serve particles of beauty (pollen) emanating from the Lord's lotus feet. This shows their special *bhakti* with humility in serving. *Niṣeva* indicates constant service, by their nature. They are attached to such service. Or *parāga* indicates service at a distance and *niṣeva* means a little service. They serve without fear, proudly (*dṛptāḥ* in some versions) or completely satisfied (*tṛptāḥ*), even doing a little service at a distance. They do their activities with regard for rules or prohibitions, at their will, because they are not bound by those rules, since they are not attached to them (*nahyamānāḥ*).

Even (*api*) the sages destroy the bondage of karma accrued for millions of births by the power of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* or *jñāna* in *samādhi. Api* indicates the lesser status of *yogīs* compared to devotees. They are proud (*dṛptāḥ*) of their achievement.

The Lord has a body which he manifests (*ātta*) by his will (*icchayā*). He is supremely independent.

Or he manifests his body with a desire to distribute his *prema-bhakti*. Thus it is suitable that he also does not respect the rules and prohibitions. Or he

manifests his body as an *avatāra* such as Matsya or Kūrma by the desire of the devotees. This shows his supreme power. What then is the question of his being bound up? There is no bondage at all.

Or even the sages destroy karma by the power of *bhakti-yoga* (*yoga*). Then what to speak of the devotees who destroy karma from the very beginning of their practice. Or the devotees (*yoginaḥ* means *bhakti-yoginaḥ*) destroy karmas. And even persons absorbed in ritual *karmas* (*yoginaḥ*) destroy karmas. There are three types of people. There are sages who are householders, engaged in ritual *karmas*. But they do these *karmas* at their will, since they are also *jñānīs*. Then there are *jñānīs* of two types: those who practice *yoga* and those who practice *karma*. The last is the lowest in status. Even this person wanders freely. What to speak of all the devotees being free, because of being dear to the Lord? The example is given to destroy Parīkṣit's doubt.

Text 33.35

gopīnāṁ tat-patīnāṁ ca sarveṣām eva dehinām
yo 'ntaś carati so 'dhyakṣaḥ krīḍaneneha deha-bhāk

Kṛṣṇa, appearing directly in this world, moves among the gopīs and their apparent husbands as well as the other inhabitants of Vraja, in his eternal spiritual body performing his pastimes.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa, directly appearing, acts as the controller by his *aṁśa*, or, as the inspiration for the control of the world, he moves about since actually he is the enjoyer. Or according to Māyāvāda opinion, he does not really enjoy others' wives, since there are no other's wives. This idea is here rejected by saying that he is also the inner controller (*adhyakṣaḥ*) of all beings (and thus the beings are real). As the enjoyer of the *gopīs*, manifesting his spiritual body (*deha-bhāk*), he moves about performing his pastimes with them (*krīḍaṇena*). Or he moves about to perform his pastimes with them.

Or *adhyakṣaḥ* can mean the presiding deity of all their hearts or the inspiration for all their senses. Thus he moves about among them. Thus like the *antaryāmī*, as the inspiration for all actions, he is not contaminated by faults of others' actions. Or just as the *antaryāmī* inspires actions of others

and is not contaminated by their faults, so in his actions he is not contaminated in Vraja. He functions as *antaryāmī* to the highest degree for the *gopīs*, and for the husbands and others to a lesser degree. He is not bound up, because he is the Supreme Lord. He manifested his form as a cowherd of *kaiśora* age for his pastimes (*deha-bhāk*). He acts according to the purpose of his *avatāra*: to spread *prema-rasa*.

Text 33.36

anugrahāya bhaktānāṁ mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ
bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍā yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet

When the Lord assumes a humanlike body to show mercy to his devotees, he engages in such pastimes. Hearing about those pastimes a person becomes dedicated to him.

COMMENTARY: This is further explained. Or, being the witness (*adhyakṣaḥ*) manifesting a form for pastimes, he gave enjoyment to the people of Vraja (*bhajate*) or to the *gopīs*. There is thus no fault in his pastimes since he accomplishes his pastimes by moving among them internally and externally as the witness. What more need be said?

He does this to give mercy to his devotees. *Padma Purāṇa* says *mad-bhaktānāṁ vinodārtham karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ*: I perform various actions for the pleasure of my devotees. To give mercy to my devotees, I take shelter of a human body. He manifests himself by taking shelter of a human form.

Or the Lord manifests his human form. He engages in pastimes to give mercy to his devotees—to the *gopīs*, people of Vraja and all other devotees in the future and past—by showing pastimes.

Or to give mercy to the *gopīs*, he accomplished (*bhajate*) pastimes (*krīḍā*) with affection. By giving mercy to the chief devotees, all others attain mercy. *Bhajate* can also mean he revealed pastimes or he followed a pattern of pastimes. This indicates that the pastimes are eternal. By that fact, all faults are automatically discarded. These pastimes were indiscernible and attractive to all hearts.

All those who hear the pastimes similar (*tādṛśī*) to the *rāsa* dance become dedicated to Bhagavān, his pastimes or the devotees (*tat*). What to speak

of those who hear about the *rāsa* dance.

Or when he takes shelter of a human body, all *jīvas*, hearing the pastimes, become dedicated to him. Humans become happy on hearing about him, since he descends among the humans and as a human becomes the chief object of worship suitable for *bhakti*.

Or the word *api* can be added to the statement. When he appears even as a human, what to speak of taking forms among sages and *devatās,* he engages in such pastimes. This shows his mercy to the devotees.

Instead of *bhāktānām* sometimes *bhūtānām* is seen. He performs pastimes to give mercy to all people—materialists, those pursing liberation and the devotees. This indicates his great mercy. How can he violate the laws of dharma (SB 10.33.27, 29)? This verse refutes that doubt. Verse 28 shows that since he is complete, these acts cannot touch him. That is also refuted by the second meaning of the word *anugrahāya (*mercy to all beings).

Text 33.37

nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyayā
manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vrajaukasaḥ

The cowherd men, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's yoga-māyā, thought their wives had remained home at their sides. They did not harbor any jealous feelings against him at any time.

COMMENTARY: Though the *gopīs* overcame their husbands and went to Kṛṣṇa, the husbands did not hate him. "Why?" Bewildered by his special *śakti*, they thought their wives were chaste, because the husbands were inhabitants of Vraja, who had dedicated everything related to their bodies and souls to him. They thought their wives who had gone to Kṛṣṇa were still by their sides.

Or the husbands did not hate their wives because they thought their wives were by their sides. Though prevented (SB 10.29.8) by their husbands, and though the *gopīs* ignoring their words, went to Kṛṣṇa, the husbands thought they were by their sides, since they thought they had returned.

Or it was said in the previous verse that he manifested his human form to show mercy to the devotees. If the husbands hated him because he took

their wives, how could that be a show of mercy to them? Continuing the topic by answering, this verse says they did not hate him.

Text 33.38

brahma-rātra upāvṛtte vāsudevānumoditāḥ
anicchantyo yayur gopyaḥ sva-gṛhān bhagavat-priyāḥ

As brāhma-muhūrta approached, Kṛṣṇa advised the gopīs to return to their homes. Although they did not wish to do so, the Lord's beloved consorts complied with his command.

COMMENTARY: Inspired in their hearts by the presiding deity of their hearts (*vāsudevānumoditāḥ*), they returned home. Or Vasudeva means he who shines among the eight Vasus. Droṇa was the principal Vasu. He was Nanda. Thus Vāsudeva means the son of Nanda. Ordered by Kṛṣṇa (*vāsudeva*) who revealed his nature as Bhagavān, for the auspiciousness of Vraja, they went home. Or full of joy (*moditāḥ*) constantly (*anu*), though they did not want to, even so, they returned home. "Why?" They considered the happiness of Kṛṣṇa (*bhagavat-priyaḥ*). If they did not go home, he could not continue to tend to the cows to satisfy his father and mother and friends, and thus the happiness of *rāsa* dance would be imperfect. And consequently, with this unaccomplished, the Lord's special sweetness would not be accomplished.

Text 33.39

vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmaṁ
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ

Anyone who faithfully and continually hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young gopīs of Vṛndāvana will attain the highest type of prema to the Lord, quickly destroy lust, the disease of the heart, and immediately become steady.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa had pastimes with the *gopīs* having fresh youth (*vadhubhiḥ*), as if newly married. Or he had special pastimes—the *rāsa* dance (*vi-krīḍitām*) with the *gopīs* who became like his wives during the

rāsa pastimes. The word *ca* indicates other pastimes also. Or *ca* means but (*tu*) to distinguish it from other pastimes. Kṛṣṇa is called Viṣṇu (all pervasive) because he spread himself everywhere by being with each *gopī*. (SB 10.33.3) One should hear with faith, because otherwise one cannot achieve the highest *bhakti*, since *rasa* will not arise. With faith, one will then hear continually (*anu-śṛṇuyāt).*

Or *nu* means certainly (*nu śṛṇuyāt*). After getting faith one will certainly hear. Or *nu* indicates a choice. One may hear or (*nu*) recite (*varṇayet*) the pastimes. Or *anu* means "everything mentioned." One should hear, chant and remember (though not mentioned) since all produce the highest *bhakti*. Of the three activities, remembrance is superior. Chanting is next, and then hearing.

The word *yaḥ* (who) indicates that it does not depend on qualification. Anyone who hears, chants or remembers will attain at every moment, ever new (*prati-labhya*) *prema* (*parām bhaktim*). He will destroy desire which is the disease of the heart. This excludes desire directed to the Lord, since *kāma* directed to the Lord gives the opposite result, the highest sweetness. He becomes the knower of the truth about all matters (*dhīraḥ*) or his heart again becomes disturbed by desire (spiritual).

These are accompanying results of attaining *prema*. That *prema* is the main result. These results also occur by hearing and chanting. What can be said about his pastimes which appear to have material lust, criticized by all? These extra results are thus mentioned. The lust between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* is a special form of mature *prema* and not material lust. This is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Or the intelligent person considering the matter (*dhīraḥ*), attaining *bhakti* with *kāma,* quickly destroys the pain in the heart due to not attaining Kṛṣṇa. This means that he attains the Lord.

May this be for the pleasure of the Lord, who is the form of consciousness, who has made this fool dance internally and externally by his pastimes.

---

[1] Devakī is another name of Yaśodā.

[2] A *madhyā gopī* is neither *prakharā* (rough) nor *mṛdvī* (mild) in speech.

Chapter Thirty-four
Nanda Mahārāja Saved and Śaṅkhacūḍa Slain

Text 34.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
ekadā deva-yātrāyāṁ gopālā jāta-kautukāḥ
anobhir anaḍud-yuktaiḥ prayayus te ’mbikā-vanam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day the cowherd men, eager to take a trip to worship Śiva, traveled by bullock carts to the Ambikā forest.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva begins a related story to show the increase of *bhakti* for the Lord in the cowherds by showing them his power directly. He describes another similar pastime, where human pastimes were mixed with power.

It was during his *kaiśora* period, which some say was Śiva-rātrī (Phālguna month), and some say was during Kārttika. The cowherds became eager to go to visit Śiva (*deva*). They went out of curiosity or for fun, not because of material desires, since they were cowherds, whose quality was to have fun. They yoked huge bulls to their carts, since cowherds normally travel by cart, and they had to carry many goods for offering at the *tīrtha.* They went gloriously (*pra-yayuḥ*). Ambikā-vana was northwest of Mathurā district on the bank of the Sarasvatī River with Śiva and Durgā as the presiding deities. Or, it was a holy place not far from Siddhapur in Gujarat province.

Text 34.2

tatra snātvā sarasvatyāṁ devaṁ paśu-patiṁ vibhum
ānarcur arhaṇair bhaktyā devīṁ ca ṇṛpate ’mbikām

O King, after arriving there, they bathed in the Sarasvatī and then devotedly worshiped with various paraphernalia the powerful Śiva and his consort, goddess Ambikā.

COMMENTARY: At the forest (*tatra*) they worshipped Śiva who is worshippable because he is dear to Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas. He was the protector of animals. Moreover, he was capable of bestowing *bhakti* to the Lord (*prabhum*). They worshipped with devotion using many articles of

worship. The word *ca* indicates that they similarly worshipped Ambikā. O King (*nṛpate*)! Being a king, you can understand the curious actions of persons who are curious. Or the Lord protects the worship performed by the devotees for the purpose of devotion to the Lord (as the king protects citizens).

Text 34.3

gāvo hiraṇyaṁ vāsāṁsi madhu madhv-annam ādṛtāḥ
brāhmaṇebhyo daduḥ sarve devo naḥ prīyatām iti

The cowherd men gave the brāhmaṇas gifts of cows, gold, clothing and cooked grains mixed with honey. Then the cowherds prayed, "May the Lord be pleased with us."

COMMENTARY: *Gāvaḥ* in the nominative is poetic license. Or it can be *gā* and *vaḥ hiraṇyam*: gold similar to that of your kingdom. They were respected by the priests of the temple or were respectful to them. Nanda and all others (*sarve*) gave gifts to the *brāhmaṇas* and prayed. They requested that Śiva or Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa (*devaḥ*) be pleased, since Vaiṣṇavas want to please the Lord and his devotees.

Text 34.4

ūṣuḥ sarasvatī-tīre jalaṁ prāśya yata-vratāḥ
rajanīṁ tāṁ mahā-bhāgā nanda-sunandakādayaḥ

Nanda and the other greatly fortunate cowherds spent that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī, strictly observing their vows. They fasted, taking only water.

COMMENTARY: They drank only water because they had taken a vow (*yata-vratāḥ*), because it was Śiva's place or because of the journey to the place. They were greatly fortunate, or were to attain some fortune. Worship of Śiva is proper since he is a devotee of the Lord.

Sunanda was the younger brother of Nanda. This means that the older brother Upananda remained in Vraja to protect it and give advice. There were also other elders there. The majority were elders and thus they are described. The boys and Kṛṣṇa did not fast since young boys are not fond of vows.

Text 34.5

kaścin mahān ahis tasmin vipine 'ti-bubhukṣitaḥ
yadṛcchayāgato nandaṁ śayānam ura-go 'grasīt

During the night a huge and extremely hungry snake appeared in that thicket. Slithering on his belly up to the sleeping Nanda Mahārāja, the snake began swallowing him.

COMMENTARY: No one was awake. That is mentioned later. The snake was actually attempting to be rescued from his condition. The snake was very hungry, because it had not eaten for a long time. By some fortune, it came to that forest. Or it lived there and by chance came to Nanda. It began to swallow Nanda by his feet. "Seeing the snake, why did Nanda not flee?" He was sleeping because of fatigue from the journey. "Why was the snake not afraid when it saw Nanda?" Nanda was inactive on the ground, covered by a cloth. "By fortune (*yadṛcchayā*)" indicates the chief cause in this event: with great pain the snake took shelter of Nanda's feet in order that it be delivered.

Text 34.6

sa cukrośāhinā grastaḥ kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahān ayam
sarpo māṁ grasate tāta prapannaṁ parimocaya

In the clutches of the snake, Nanda Mahārāja cried out, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, my dear boy! This huge serpent is swallowing me! Please save me, as I am surrendered to you!"

COMMENTARY: The snake was swallowing his feet or swallowed them. Nanda called out twice to Kṛṣṇa out of fear or affection. This snake is large. I cannot fight it by myself. It also suggests that as a devotee, Vidhyādhara was the best of snakes. O son! Nanda calls him with affection. I do not suffer from death, but from separation from you. Save your father who is surrendered to you or is your devotee. This is said with humility or in pain. Free me so that everything is auspicious (*parimocaya*) so that all are free of injury, while I give up consideration of my own happiness. Or by saving me without injury, the snake will be saved. Or the snake is swallowing me, your father. Save the snake from its curse. By doing that, I will be freed.

Text 34.7

tasya cākranditaṁ śrutvā gopālāḥ sahasotthitāḥ
grastaṁ ca dṛṣṭvā vibhrāntāḥ sarpaṁ vivyadhur ulmukaiḥ

When the cowherd men heard the cries of Nanda, they immediately rose up and saw that he was being swallowed. Distraught, they beat the serpent with blazing torches.

COMMENTARY: The cowherds heard him crying out pitifully or shouting. Since they were cowherds, they were dedicated to Nanda. He was their king. Thus, immediately they got up. They had been sleeping. They suddenly heard him yelling. They heard and saw simultaneously (*ca*). This indicates their alertness. Though they were capable of easily freeing him, they beat the snake with torches because they were confused.

Text 34.8

alātair dahyamāno 'pi nāmuñcat tam uraṅgamaḥ
tam aspṛśat padābhyetya bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

But even though the firebrands were burning him, the serpent would not release Nanda Mahārāja. Then the Supreme Lord, master of his devotees, came to the spot and touched the snake with his foot.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa touched him just slightly with his left foot, cool and soft like a lotus. Nanda could be freed from the snake and the snake could be freed from the curse just by seeing Kṛṣṇa or concentrating on him. However, he wanted to give *bhakti* by his mercy, seeing the *bhakti* involved in the snake's grabbing Nanda's feet. He did this by seeming to kick the snake in anger. That is revealed later.

Kṛṣṇa arrived and faced him. He was staying further away with his friends, avoiding the elders, since that was restrictive to their play. He revealed his powers (*bhagavān*). He should hide his powers but he was the protector of the devotees (*sātvatām patiḥ*). He did it out of great affection.

Text 34.9

sa vai bhagavataḥ śrīmat pāda-sparśa-hatāśubhaḥ
bheje sarpa-vapur hitvā rūpaṁ vidyādharārcitam

The snake had all his sinful reactions destroyed by the touch of the Supreme Lord's divine foot, and thus he gave up his serpent body and appeared in the form of a worshipable Vidyādhara.

COMMENTARY: *Vai* means it is accomplished. By the touch of the foot, endowed with a wealth of all good qualities (*śrīmat*), the foot of Kṛṣṇa, who displayed his unlimited power (*bhagavataḥ*), the snake was freed from his unlimited sins of many births or his great offense which could not be counteracted by any means. The touch of his beautiful foot is mentioned again in this verse because it could produce great beauty. The snake attained a form rare among the Vidyādharas. He attained a form more beautiful than his previous one.

Text 34.10

tam apṛcchad dhṛṣīkeśaḥ praṇataṁ samavasthitam
dīpyamānena vapuṣā puruṣaṁ hema-mālinam

The Supreme Hṛṣīkeśa then questioned this personality, who was standing before him with his head bowed, his brilliantly effulgent body bedecked with golden necklaces.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though the Lord was full of knowledge, as the promoter of all senses (*hṛṣīkeśaḥ*), he questioned the person offering respects with folded hands (*sam-avasthitam*), having a human form with a shining body and golden garland or with a golden crown, earrings and other ornaments.

Text 34.11

ko bhavān parayā lakṣmyā rocate 'dbhuta-darśanaḥ
kathaṁ jugupsitām etāṁ gatiṁ vā prāpito 'vaśaḥ

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear sir, you appear so wonderful, glowing with such great beauty. Who are you? And who forced you to assume this terrible body of a snake?

COMMENTARY: Instead of *adbhuta* sometimes *śobha* (beautiful) is seen. Who are you with such a beautiful or astonishing form? Because of whom or for what reason did you take the form of a snake, though you did not

desire it? Why? *Vaśa* means a wish or power. Otherwise it would be impossible for you to take a form like this. That is the implication of the questions. He also wanted to strengthen the affection of the cowherds who had just seen his display of powers. It also connects the previous and later verses. Or he asks in order to prevent the possibility that beautiful cowherds would offend sages deformed by austerities in Mathurā district.

Texts 34.12–13

sarpa uvāca
ahaṁ vidyādharaḥ kaścit sudarśana iti śrutaḥ
śriyā svarūpa-sampattyā vimānenācaran diśaḥ
ṛṣīn virūpāṅgirasaḥ prāhasaṁ rūpa-darpitaḥ
tair imāṁ prāpito yoniṁ pralabdhaiḥ svena pāpmanā

The serpent replied: I am a well-known Vidyādhara named Sudarśana. I was very wealthy and beautiful, and I used to wander freely in all directions in my airplane. Once I saw some homely sages of the lineage of Aṅgirā Muni. Proud of my beauty, I ridiculed them, and because of my sin they made me assume this lowly form.

COMMENTARY: I was some Vidyādhara. This shows his humility and also indicates he was the best Vidyādhara. His name Sudarśana (pleasant to see) indicates he had a beautiful form. With a wealth of beauty and glory, I would travel about. Or I was endowed with beauty because of the many features of my form. I would wander here and there for play. The sages in Aṅgirā's lineage were naturally deformed and because of austerity had become thin. Proud of my beauty, I mocked them by laughing loudly. They did not become angry. They were not at fault. It was his sin.

Text 34.14

śāpo me 'nugrahāyaiva kṛtas taiḥ karuṇātmabhiḥ
yad ahaṁ loka-guruṇā padā spṛṣṭo hatāśubhaḥ

It was actually for my benefit that those merciful sages cursed me, since now I have been touched by the foot of the Lord of all the worlds and have thus been relieved of all inauspiciousness.

COMMENTARY: Ah! What can be said of the power of saintly people? Because of that, my wicked act became the highest blessing. The sages were most merciful because they did not become disturbed by my offense. They were interested in delivering fallen persons. It is understood that they said, "In the future you will be born in Mathurā area and will receive the highest auspiciousness by being touched by Kṛṣṇa's lotus foot." Otherwise he could never attain such good fortune. Thus the curse was for giving mercy. I would be touched by the foot of the Lord of the universe (*loka-gurunā*)—a person hard to attain.

Or I was touched by the foot of the best person among all *jīvas* or in all planets. Or I was touched by the foot which is worshipped as supreme by all worlds. He does not directly say "your foot" out of great respect. All sins were destroyed by the touch or seeing him. Or even being touched I am not free of sin (*ahatāśubhaḥ*). He says this out of humility, having been completely freed of the curse.

Text 34.15

taṁ tvāhaṁ bhava-bhītānāṁ prapannānāṁ bhayāpaham
āpṛcche śāpa-nirmuktaḥ pāda-sparśād amīva-han

My Lord, you destroy all fear for those who, fearing this material world, take shelter of you. By the touch of your feet I am now freed from the curse of the sages. O destroyer of distress, please let me return to my planet.

COMMENTARY: I bid farewell (*āpṛcche*) to you (*tvā*), the greatest deliverer (*tam*). "Why do you ask permission to go to your planet? Why do you not ask for liberation?" You completely destroy the fear of those who surrender out of fear of material existence. Where then is the question of fear of material existence for us devotees who are by nature *sāttvika*. By serving you with music we attain happiness greater than liberation. I have no suffering or offense at all, since I have been touched by your foot. You are the destroyer of all suffering at the root (*amīva-han*).

Text 34.16

prapanno 'smi mahā-yogin mahā-puruṣa sat-pate
anujānīhi māṁ deva sarva-lokeśvareśvara

O master of mystic power, O great personality, O Lord of the devotees, I surrender to you. Please command me as you will, O supreme God, Lord of all lords of the universe.

COMMENTARY: Wherever I reside, I will always desire to surrender to you. That is expressed in this verse. I take shelter of you (*prapannaḥ*). Another version has *tvām āśrito 'smi*. "But that is rarely achieved." But you are endowed with unlimited spiritual powers (*mahā-yogin*), since you are the Supreme Lord (*mahā-puruṣa*). Nothing is difficult because you have the power. Particularly, you protect the devotees (*sat-pate*). Or O best of protectors! O Kṛṣṇa (instead of *deva*), who appeared in this world to show unlimited powers! O Bhagavān, you should fulfill the desires of the surrendered!

Or it was said the Lord destroys fear for the surrendered. Considering his own surrender, he praises the Lord. The cause of surrender is stated by the various names of the Lord.

Now give me permission to leave for my planet. "You should stay here, engaged in your service." O Kṛṣṇa, *para-brahman* in human form! I have no qualification to stay, as I am a *devatā* with a form differing from yours. That planet is also yours, lord of all planets! You also make us enjoy the results of our previous actions. Or what can I do, being impelled by you, the giver of karmic results? O Lord *(īśvara*)! Or O Lord of all controllers of planets like Brahmā! I, like Indra, am not qualified to stand in front of you.

Text 34.17

brahma-daṇḍād vimukto 'haṁ sadyas te 'cyuta darśanāt
yan-nāma gṛhṇann akhilān śrotṝn ātmānam eva ca
sadyaḥ punāti kiṁ bhūyas tasya spṛṣṭaḥ padā hi te

O infallible one, I was immediately freed from the *brāhmaṇas'* punishment simply by seeing you. Anyone who chants your name purifies all who hear his chanting, as well as himself. How much more, then, will I purify others, having been touched by your lotus feet?

COMMENTARY: Now I have realized your greatness. I was immediately freed from the *brāhmaṇas'* punishment, which is difficult to counteract. You never fall from your greatness (*acyuta*). Or O Kṛṣṇa, you never leave Gokula. Immediately I was freed, in an excellent manner just described, from the curse. Even before being touched, I was freed. But by the touch of your foot I attained good intelligence to attain special *bhakti*. Citsukha has *vinirmuktaḥ*. One should go in front of Brahmā and other devotees and glorify the Lord.

Simply by uttering your name even once, without any faith (since the verb is in the present tense *gṛhṇan*), without fully chanting, it purifies all people immediately. There is no qualification. It purifies all, and there is no consideration of time, since it acts immediately. And even just hearing the name has this effect. This has been my case (*ātmānam eva*). Not distinguishing between hearing and chanting shows the greatness of the name. The word *ca* indicates that even relatives of those who hear and chant get the effect. And being touched by your foot, definitely I will purify a person even more (*bhūyaḥ*). What more can be said?

Text 34.18

ity anujñāpya dāśārhaṁ parikramyābhivandya ca
sudarśano divaṁ yātaḥ kṛcchrān nandaś ca mocitaḥ

Thus receiving the permission of Kṛṣṇa, Sudarśana circumambulated him, bowed down to offer him homage and then returned to his heavenly planet. Nanda Mahārāja was thus delivered from peril.

COMMENTARY: Thus receiving permission, since silence is approval (*maunam sammatim-lakṣaṇam*), he departed. His consent was naturally given, since the Lord had appeared in the Yadu dynasty to benefit the whole world (*dāśārham*). Kṛṣṇa reveals his qualities such as inscrutability. Thus, even before Brahmā he was silent. Sudarśana thought, "Why should he speak to me?" Actually he performed this pastime for the benefit of the cowherds. Sudarśana offered his respects to the Lord and Nanda (*ca*). The name *sudarśana* indicates his beauty or by seeing Kṛṣṇa, his sight reached perfection. He went with difficulty because of separation from the Lord (*kṛccrāt*). By freeing the snake, Nanda was easily freed. Or Nanda was freed from suffering caused by the snake (*kṛccrāt*).

Text 34.19

niśāmya kṛṣṇasya tad ātma-vaibhavaṁ
vrajaukaso vismita-cetasas tataḥ
samāpya tasmin niyamaṁ punar vrajaṁ
ṇṛpāyayus tat kathayanta ādṛtāḥ

The inhabitants of Vraja were astonished to see the mighty power of Kṛṣṇa. Dear King, they then completed their worship of Śiva and returned to Vraja, along the way respectfully describing Kṛṣṇa's powerful acts.

COMMENTARY: They heard the glories of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa* or the glory of their extraordinary relative (*ātma-vaibhavan*) from Sudarśana. Or they heard their own glorification. Since they considered themselves as belonging to the Lord, they were all regarded as his relatives. Hearing those glories they were astonished.

Or they were astonished at what Sudarśana had said since they could not make sense of it, being confused by intense *prema* as people of Vraja (*vrajaukasaḥ*). Or though hearing, they were not astonished (*avismita-cetasaḥ*) since they had many times experienced his great powers. Then, after Sudarśana left, after completing the vows of staying there for three days in the forest, they broke their vow and returned to Vraja. Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit in joy "O King!" Or just as you protect the people, they protected all people by relating this story.

This forest was seventy *krośas* north of Mathurā on the bank of the Gaṅgā, according to Śukadeva's description. This was southeast of Vraja. Or according to some, out of *bhāva* Śukadeva considered himself living in Vraja. They came from Gujarat to Vraja. *Vaibhavam* can also mean "events not experienced before." Respected by Kṛṣṇa or Nanda (*ādṛtāḥ*), they came to Vraja. Or with great respect, having increased their *bhakti* (*tataḥ*), they came there.

Text 34.20

kadācid atha govindo rāmaś cādbhuta-vikramaḥ
vijahratur vane rātryāṁ madhya-gau vraja-yoṣitām

Once Govinda and Balarāma, the performers of wonderful feats, were playing in the forest at night with the young girls of Vraja.

COMMENTARY: Having shown affection for Nanda – his father, now Kṛṣṇa shows affection for Vraja. This story continues until the end of the chapter. Sometime after freeing Nanda, in the spring, the supreme *rasika* as a cowherd (*govindaḥ*) and Balarāma played. *Rāma* means he who gives happiness to Kṛṣṇa by having a friendly relation with Kṛṣṇa's *gopīs*. In Vraja he is mainly friendly with Kṛṣṇa, not acting as an elder brother. Kṛṣṇa brought him there for a special purpose and for special happiness. That is made clear later.

Because Balarāma is secondary, he is mentioned last. This is indicated by the word *ca*. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma perform extraordinary actions (*adbhuta-vikramaḥ*). Or the phrase modified only Balarāma since he protected the *gopīs* while Kṛṣṇa was far away and killed Śaṅkhacūḍa.

"Why did the *gopīs* assemble there?" The two were suddenly in the midst of the *gopīs* who had assembled and come to Vṛndāvana to pick flowers in the spring night, bright with moonlight.

"Why did they stay there?" They were women of Vraja, having special *prema* for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 34.21

upagīyamānau lalitaṁ strī-janair baddha-sauhṛdaiḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtānuliptāṅgau sragvinau virajo-'mbarau

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wore flower garlands and spotless garments, and their limbs were beautifully decorated and anointed. The women sang their glories in a charming way, bound to them by affection.

COMMENTARY: Three verses (21-23) describe the event. They were praised by women, who were expert at singing. Their singing is described in SB 10.33.9. They sang softly (*lalitam*), very close to them. Both were praised, since Balarāma's activities assisted Kṛṣṇa. "Why did they praise Balarāma?" They had a strong friendship with Kṛṣṇa (who was assisted by Balarāma). Or they were bound by the chains of *prema*. By that affection there could be no fault in their soft singing. The two were beautifully ornamented and smeared with sandalwood. They wore garlands and spotless clothes. The night was beautiful.

Text 34.22

niśā-mukhaṁ mānayantāv uditoḍupa-tārakam
mallikā-gandha-mattāli- juṣṭaṁ kumuda-vāyunā

The two Lords praised the nightfall, signaled by the rising of the moon and the appearance of stars, a lotus-scented breeze and bees intoxicated by the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

COMMENTARY: The breeze was soft, fragrant and cooling. Though there are many colorful flowers in Vṛndāvana, only jasmine and lotus are mentioned here. They blossomed at night for the special occasion.

Text 34.23

jagatuḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ manaḥ-śravaṇa-maṅgalam
tau kalpayantau yugapat svara-maṇḍala-mūrcchitam

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sang, producing the entire range of musical sounds simultaneously. Their singing brought happiness to the ears and minds of all living beings.

COMMENTARY: Their singing brought happiness (*maṅgalam*) to the ears and minds of all beings. The songs had *mūrcchana*s of all the notes. *Saṅgīta-sāra* describes this. When the seven notes, ascending and descending are sung in the order it is called *mūrcchana*. From these, starting with each note of the scale, seven scales are derived. These are played or sung in three *grāmas* (basic scales) making twenty-one *mūrcchanas.*

The two had pastimes of singing with the *gopīs*, skillful at singing songs which amazed the universe. The singing became excellent because of the two singing together. The *gopīs* became blissful with this. The purpose was to give happiness to Balarāma who is the *ācārya* of singing as Śeṣa *avatāra*, in the association of the *gopīs* expert at music.

Text 34.24

gopyas tad-gītam ākarṇya mūrcchitā nāvidan nṛpa
sraṁsad-dukūlam ātmānaṁ srasta-keśa-srajaṁ tataḥ

The *gopīs* became stunned when they heard that song. O King, they did not notice that their fine garments were becoming loose and their hair

and garlands disheveled.

COMMENTARY: After hearing Kṛṣṇa's song, the *gopīs* fainted. But first they made attempts to remain composed. Or they fainted because of the song, which was most attractive, not depending on anything else. O King! You can understand this. Their fainting was not improper.

Text 34.25

evaṁ vikrīḍatoḥ svairaṁ gāyatoḥ sampramatta-vat
śaṅkhacūḍa iti khyāto dhanadānucaro 'bhyagāt

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma thus played and sang according to their own sweet will and with excitement, a servant of Kuvera named Śaṅkhacūḍa came upon the scene.

COMMENTARY: Exceptional beauty was created by their singing and the *gopīs'* singing. The two brothers played together without restraints with skillful singing as if completely mad (*sampramattavat*). By the singing, the minds became completely bound. Or the two sang, completely absorbed in the singing of the *gopīs*. The affix *saṁ* indicates that their absorption was more than that of the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇa's bewilderment was because of the *gopīs'* special *bhāva* from singing. Balarāma's bewilderment was because of the beauty of the songs. The suffix *vat* (as if) is used in deference to sages of various moods who may be disturbed by this story concerning the Lord.

At this time, the demon came in front of them. The demon had on his head a huge jewel shaped like a conch. Thus he was famous by that name. He appeared before them with that form. Where did he get the jewel from? It was given by Kuvera because of his service. He was by species a member of the Yakṣas. *Dhanada* means appropriately "giver of wealth." Or he stole the jewel when he was engaged in guarding wealth. As a Guhyaka, he was a servant of Kuvera.

Or he did not serve Kuvera (*adhanada*). He gave up the *devatās* and sided with the demons. Thus he became a servant of Kaṁsa.

Text 34.26

tayor nirīkṣato rajas tan-nāthaṁ pramadā-janam
krośantaṁ kālayām āsa diśy udīcyām aśaṅkitaḥ

O King, even as the two Lords looked on, Śaṅkhacūḍa brazenly began driving the women off toward the north. The women, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as their Lords, began to cry out to them.

COMMENTARY: Because of his attack, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked on with disrespect. O King! Śukadeva calls out because of astonishment at the foolishness of the demon, or out of great pain. Or the demon remained (*rājan*) there as if insane and then drove them off fearlessly. It was not difficult to take the women away, since they were soft by nature. The singular indicates that one woman, Rādhā, was taken, as in *Lalita-mādhava*. When the plural is used later, it is used out of respect. Or it indicates that he also took her attendants. Or he says "Do not fear!" in verse 29 to comfort all of them. Or the singular is used in this verse to indicate a class. *Janaḥ* indicates all the *gopīs*. They had been mad with *prema* because of the singing (*pramadā*). Thus they were inattentive to the situation.

They called out to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma loudly with painful voices. The demon took them by force and by many methods, far away to the north, where the Guhyakas had their homes. First he would take them to his house. Or they were playing east of Govardhana. The demon took them to Kaṁsa at Mathurā in the north.

Text 34.27

krośantaṁ kṛṣṇa rāmeti vilokya sva-parigraham
yathā gā dasyunā grastā bhrātarāv anvadhāvatām

Hearing their devotees crying out "Kṛṣṇa! Rāma!" and seeing that they were just like cows being stolen by a thief, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to run after the demon.

COMMENTARY: Loudly the *gopīs* chanted or called out their names (*krośantam*). Because they called out, the two boys looked carefully (*vilokya*). Or the present tense is used to indicate that they called out continuously. They saw their dear ones (*sva-parigraham*) being taken off, and thus had to protect them. The two felt great pain.

The two out of affection for each other acted as one person and ran after the demon. The *gopīs* were like cows taken by the teeth by a tiger. As best of the cowherds, they could run fast. They ran after the demon. It is also suggested that they ran fast, since otherwise some disaster would occur.

Text 34.28

mā bhaiṣṭety abhayārāvau śāla-hastau tarasvinau
āsedatus taṁ tarasā tvaritaṁ guhyakādhamam

The Lords called out in reply, "Do not fear! "Then they picked up logs of the śāla tree and running immediately, quickly caught up with that lowest of Guhyakas.

COMMENTARY: Replying in order to make the *gopīs* fearless, they said, "Do not fear!" They caught up with the person who had taken the women. They grabbed *śāla* trees because they were strong boys or because Kṛṣṇa was eager to take the jewel. The demon was the lowest of the Guhyakas since he had previously performed such low acts.

Text 34.29

sa vīkṣya tāv anuprāptau kāla-mṛtyū ivodvijan
viṣṛjya strī-janaṁ mūḍhaḥ prādravaj jīvitecchayā

When Śaṅkhacūḍa saw the two of them coming toward him like the personified forces of time and death, he was filled with anxiety. Confused, he abandoned the women and fled for his life.

COMMENTARY: He saw the two coming after him (*anuprāptau*). He was not worried about their coming, since he was insane, but he looked back constantly with great fear. The two were like time, the instigator and death, the final result. Though the two are forms of the highest bliss, they appeared in this way to the foolish demon because of his fear. That is clear in SB 10.43.17, where it is explained that the wrestlers of Kaṁsa saw Kṛṣṇa as a thunderbolt and Kaṁsa saw him as death. Terrified (*udvijan*), he fled with speed as previously, to save his life, not with a desire for fame. He simply fled, without fighting. This was because he was a fool, since he provoked his own death and did not see that running away would only

produce his death. Or he was a fool because he did not know proper conduct at all.

Text 34.30

tam anvadhāvad govindo yatra yatra sa dhāvati
jihīrṣus tac-chiro-ratnaṁ tasthau rakṣan striyo balaḥ

Govinda chased the demon wherever he ran, eager to take his crest jewel. Meanwhile Balarāma stayed with the women to protect them.

COMMENTARY: Since Kṛṣṇa was the king of Gokula (*govindaḥ*), it was proper that he pursue the demon in anger to kill him and free the *gopīs*. "Why did he not kill the demon from far off by throwing stones?" He wanted to take the jewel from the demon when he was alive, since it would be improper to touch him when dead. Balarāma stayed with the women where the demon had left them. He could not override the desire of his younger brother. He was capable of protecting them from the demon since he was strong (*balaḥ*). Or he was also capable of killing the demon. The reason Kṛṣṇa brought him was so that he could protect the women.

Text 34.31

avidūra ivābhyetya śiras tasya durātmanaḥ
jahāra muṣṭinaivāṅga saha-cūḍa-maṇiṁ vibhuḥ

The mighty Lord overtook Śaṅkhacūḍa from a great distance as if from nearby, my dear King, and then with his fist the Lord removed the wicked demon's head, together with his crest jewel.

COMMENTARY: Though far away, Kṛṣṇa appeared near and faced him. It was improper to kill a fleeing person from behind. Or he appeared on all sides, since it was improper to kill him from behind. The demon was wicked because he had taken the women. Kṛṣṇa removed the head along with the jewel with one fist only. It did not take effort since he was the Lord (*vibhuḥ*). *Aṅga* is an address expressing joy. Or he removed his head at the same time as the jewel. This shows that killing him took no effort. He killed him for the jewel.

Text 34.32

śaṅkhacūḍaṁ nihatyaivaṁ maṇim ādāya bhāsvaram
agrajāyādadāt prītyā paśyantīnāṁ ca yoṣitām

Having thus killed the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa and taken away his shining jewel, Kṛṣṇa gave it to his elder brother with great satisfaction as the gopīs watched.

COMMENTARY: He killed him completely (*ni-hatya*). He took the demon's wealth and his jewel. The jewel had a natural brilliance. He took the jewel to give to one of his beloveds privately. He knew that it was impossible to keep it hidden. Therefore he gave it to his older brother. The women looked on with affection. They all thought, "Kṛṣṇa loves me. He will give me the jewel." With joy they looked at Kṛṣṇa or the jewel. The genitive case is used to indicate disinterest. To avoid one receiving it and others being envious, he ignored them and gave it to Balarāma, who was respected. Thus, no one could be envious. He desired to give the jewel to Rādhā. "If I give it to her, others will hate me. I have given it to him. Since he is omniscient, he will give it to her, thinking of pleasing me. Then there is no worry of anyone being angry." Thus he gave the jewel with affection to Balarāma.

Or in giving the jewel to Balarāma to avoid envy among them, all the *gopīs* saw this with joy, with everyone in agreement (*paśyantīnāṁ ca yoṣitām*). If there was no agreement, he could not give it to him. This is the deep intention. This was another reason for bringing Balarāma. Thus, this act shows his great affection for Balarāma. When the *gopīs* were taken away by the demon and were shouting for a moment, he did not rescue them along with Balarāma though he saw them, in order to show to Balarāma the *gopīs'* great attraction to Balarāma's song. If he did not do that, this would not be revealed.

Since Kṛṣṇa's other activities during this time would cause embarrassment to all, they were not discussed in Vraja at this time. Nanda, Yaśodā and others were not told. Or even though the events were told by the *gopīs* or the two boys on some pretext, everyone was astonished by experiencing his continual greatness, and thus though they heard, they did not hear them. Thus Śukadeva does not mention about this, since there were no details about these revelations.

Chapter Thirty-five
The Gopīs Sing of Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest (*Yugala-gītā*)

Text 35.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
gopyaḥ kṛṣṇe vanaṁ yāte tam anudruta-cetasaḥ
kṛṣṇa-līlāḥ pragāyantyo ninyur duḥkhena vāsarān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Whenever Kṛṣṇa went to the forest, the minds of the *gopīs* would run after him, and thus the young girls sadly spent their days singing of his pastimes.

COMMENTARY: The *gopīs* who delighted in Kṛṣṇa during the night with the *rāsa* pastimes would be overcome with great sorrow during the day. Parāśara says:

sa tathā saha gopībhir rarāma madhuṣudanaḥ
tathābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇas tena vinābhavat

Kṛṣṇa sported with the *gopīs* in such a way that during the day a moment felt like millions of years in his absence. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

When Kṛṣṇa, the most attractive person or he who was filled with the highest bliss, went to the forest of Vṛndāvana during the day, the *gopīs* could not tolerate the separation. Their hearts quickly pursued him because of the attachment. They sang in a remarkable manner which attracted the whole universe, predominated with the beguiling sound of the flute, about Kṛṣṇa's forest pastimes with Kṛṣṇa dressed in his forest outfit. Because their hearts followed him, they could not do their household chores. They absorbed themselves in his pastimes since the pastimes were non-different from him. They passed the remaining time in sorrow singing. This is confirmed in verse 26. Since they passed their time singing, the greatness of singing his pastimes is shown.

Or they passed their days with difficulty, not able to tolerate the separation, because they sang about his pastimes. This was because they were *gopīs*, devoted to him alone.

All glories to the unprecedented greatness of the *gopīs.* Taking a particle of their support, I will explain their song.

Texts 35.2–3

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ
vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapolo
valgita-bhrur adharārpita-veṇum
komalāṅgulibhir āśrita-mārgaṁ
gopya īrayati yatra mukundaḥ
vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ saha siddhair
vismitās tad upadhārya sa-lajjāḥ
kāma-mārgaṇa-samarpita-cittāḥ
kaśmalaṁ yayur apasmṛta-nīvyaḥ

The gopīs said: When Mukunda vibrates the flute he has placed to his lips, stopping its holes with his tender fingers, he rests his left cheek on his left arm and makes his eyebrows dance. At that time the demigoddesses traveling in the sky with their husbands become amazed. As those ladies listen, they are embarrassed to find their minds yielding to the pursuit of desire, and in their distress they are unaware that the belts of their garments are loosening.

COMMENTARY: Since there were many independent speakers, the verses represent different *gopīs* speaking.

Among the groups some are present in front of Yaśodā (for instance *tava sutaḥ sate* in verse 14*)*.

In the first verse, after going out in the morning he played his flute on the road. The women from heaven, desiring to see him after he has entered his house, remained in the sky at night. First they saw him clearly because they were in their vehicles in the sky. He enacts beautiful pastimes while playing his flute with expressions on his face. He has his left cheek resting on his left arm and looks upwards crookedly. They were strongly agitated with *prema* on thinking that he was looking at them. This is described in two verses.

The left arm is mentioned rather than the right arm because *vāma* also means attractive. Because he rests his left check on his left arm, his neck

slightly bends. Because his head is bent, his glance is crooked as he looks upward. He is absorbed in playing the flute. Since he is standing in the famous pose with three bends, his right foot is placed over his left foot. His brow flutters. *Bhru* instead of *bhrū* is poetic license. Some versions have *bhrū.* He plays his flute which is offered to his lips. Or he plays a flute which is always placed on or given to his lips, as a constant configuration. It is similar to the construction *āhitāgni:* a person who maintains a sacrificial fire perpetually, though the order of words is reversed *(adharārpita* instead of *arpitādhara*).

The lips are not compared to red *bimba* fruits since even without the sweetness of the pink color, just by the touch of the lips to the flute, the flute playing becomes attractive. Or, because of Kṛṣṇa's contact with the flute at all times, the lips became angry and thus changed to a pale color.

A great person is said to have hands hardened without work and feet which remain soft, though he walks on the road. But Kṛṣṇa's fingers are described as soft in this verse. Giving up their hard aspect in comparison to other limbs, the fingers, out of affection, display their soft aspect. Out of envy the *gopīs* say, "Those soft fingers should not touch the hard flute but rather touch our soft limbs." Though he has a natural sweetness in his beauty, in playing the flute he shows particular sweetness by his special gestures. The great attractiveness of his flute playing is shown in this verse. O *gopīs!* Being very intelligent, you can understand this truth. But others cannot.

Yatra means "when." The usage indicates that the flute playing was the sole and inevitable cause of the heavenly women's bewilderment. This applies to later verses also. The heavenly women were riding in the airplanes with *devatās* controlling the planes (*siddhaiḥ*). Or they were going (*yāna*) in the sky. Or they were the wives of *siddhas* who had planes in the sky. This means that they were not close to the Lord and did not live in Vṛndāvana. They were above, at a distance. *Siddha* refers to a type of *devatā* or to *jīvan-muktas,* persons who would be liberated. They were devoid of *bhakti-rasa*. Even they were astonished since they had never experienced this. The wives of these men became embarrassed by the arousal of love and then lost control. Or the *siddhas* also lost control. The

wives were the chief experiencers of this *rasa*, and the men were secondary. Thus it is said "the women with the *siddhas*."

The sound entered through the ears to the heart (*upadhārya*). First they were astonished and then, by the arousal of desire, their clothing became loose. Then they became embarrassed. Their hearts, their treasures, had been offered to the five arrows of Cupid (starting with bewilderment), with a fear of death. This means their hearts were controlled by Cupid. This should be kept somewhere privately. These two verses show the great attraction of the sound of the flute and Kṛṣṇa's form and pastimes.

Though everyone should be bewildered by the flute and his beauty, particularly the wives of the *siddhas* are mentioned. He has his left cheek resting on his left arm and looks upwards crookedly. They were strongly agitated with *prema* on thinking that he was looking at them. This should be understood in later verses also. The main persons described in the verses feel the effects of Kṛṣṇa's presence. The details are explained with each pair of verse.

The two verses are connected in meaning. They feel their desires will be fulfilled when they meet with Kṛṣṇa. The first of the two verses generally describes Kṛṣṇa's beauty and pastimes. The second verse indicates that there will be great sweetness when they can meet with him, though he is independent. All verses are filled with colorful descriptions.

Texts 35.4–5

hanta citram abalāḥ śṛṇutedaṁ
hāra-hāsa urasi sthira-vidyut
nanda-sūnur ayam ārta-janānāṁ
narma-do yarhi kūjita-veṇuḥ
vṛndaśo vraja-vṛṣā mṛga-gāvo
veṇu-vādya-hṛta-cetasa ārāt
danta-daṣṭa-kavalā dhṛta-karṇā
nidritā likhita-citram ivāsan

O girls! This son of Nanda, who gives joy to the distressed, bears motionless lightning on his chest and has an attractive smile. Now please hear something wonderful. When he vibrates his flute, bulls, deer and

cows of Vraja and the forest are all captivated by the sound, and they stop chewing the food in their mouths and cock their ears. Stunned, they appear as if asleep, or like figures in a painting.

COMMENTARY: Having come to the edge of the forest, he plays his flute to give joy to the forest inhabitants and to his assistants who have been separated from him by the night and to send home the *gopīs* who are following him and pained by separation. The bewilderment of the bulls and other animals of Vraja, as he gives mercy to the people of Vraja with his flute, is joyfully described in two verses.

Hanta expresses surprise. How astonishing (*citra*). O girls (*abalāḥ*)! This (*abalāḥ* also means weak) suggests that the *gopīs* have lost the power of their senses because of the disturbance of *prema*. He has stationary lightning on his chest. This is Lakṣmī, who is fickle and golden. His chest is compared to a cloud. This is called *adbhuta upamā*. Lakṣmī on his chest is like stationary lightning on a cloud. This indicates special beauty. Or not knowing about this line which is Lakṣmī on his chest, they describe it as lightning.

He is the son of Nanda. Nanda means he who gives joy to the world. Having his father's nature, Kṛṣṇa also gives joy to the world. *Ayam* indicates that he is now leaving the house. The sound of his flute is also very close. Or *nandasūnuḥ* means the son who gives joy to all of Vraja. *Ayam* indicates that everyone is directly experiencing him.

He gives joy (*narma-daḥ*) to the suffering people. With his flute, he announces his journey to the forest, where he will be during the day, to the animals and birds of the forest and village, who were separated from him during the night. His flute comforts the *gopīs*.

Kūjita-veṇuḥ is in the past tense (he played his flute) to indicate that the bulls and others did not hear it immediately, since they were far away. It can be inferred that he had his left arm touching his left cheek as described in the previous verses. That is usually how he plays his flute.

Hanta can also express joy or lamentation. He has an attractive smile (*hāra-hāsaḥ*). He has Lakṣmī, whose special effulgence (*vidyut*) remains always (*sthira*) on his chest. He has a flute which sounds so as to give joy to suffering people.

The sound of the flute in this verse can also indicate that it is not a song, just some sounds. All the animals in Vraja—the bulls, the Kṛṣṇa-sāra deer, cows and one-year old calves (both males and females indicated by the words “bulls and cows”) react to the sound. The newer calves are far off in another place with their mothers. Others, being very young, are kept within Vraja. These are all indicated here. The buffalos in the village and boars in the forest also are similarly affected by the flute. The bulls are specifically mentioned because Kṛṣṇa has affection for them. The deer in Vraja are mentioned since they are friends with the other animals in Vraja. Or the deer are mentioned to represent all other animals. That is implied in the verse. The order of the animals is according to increasing excellence of attraction to the Lord. The deer are superior to the bulls and the cows are superior to the deer. They have more intelligence to relish the song of the flute. The assisting cowherds are not mentioned since they are always completely full of bliss.

Their hearts are stolen by the playing (*vādya*) of the flute, without even seeing him. Thus his playing is mentioned again. They have mouthfuls of chewed grass in their mouths, which is neither swallowed nor spit out, because their hearts have been stolen. It is as if they fear to make any noise when they hear the flute. Their ears are raised to hear the flute. In sleeping, there is some movement. The example of a painted picture is given to indicate there is no movement at all. The word *likhita* is used so that the word *citra* does not simply mean “astonishing” but instead means picture. The depiction in the picture is exact.

Or hearing the flute once in the distance, their hearts become agitated. By hearing it again, they put their front feet over their ears to prevent the sound, fearing death by separation. They do not swallow food, to prevent the sound from entering within. Then they seem to faint by seeing him and constantly hearing the sound. This response is considered superior to that of the heavenly women.

Texts 35.6–7

barhiṇa-stabaka-dhātu-palāśair
baddha-malla-paribarha-viḍambaḥ
karhicit sa-bala āli sa gopair

gāḥ samāhvayati yatra mukundaḥ
tarhi bhagna-gatayaḥ sarito vai
tat-padāmbuja-rajo ’nila-nītam
spṛhayatīr vayam ivābahu-puṇyāḥ
prema-vepita-bhujāḥ stimitāpaḥ

My dear gopī, sometimes Mukunda imitates the appearance of a wrestler by decorating himself with leaves, peacock feathers and colored minerals. Then, in the company of Balarāma and the cowherd boys, he plays his flute to call the cows. At that time the rivers stop flowing, their water stunned by the ecstasy they feel as they eagerly wait for the wind to bring them the dust of his lotus feet. But like us, the rivers are not very pious, and thus they merely wait with their arms trembling out of love.

COMMENTARY: Having entered the forest, decorated with forest ornaments befitting a costumed person, he goes to rivers and lakes to give water to the cows. The rivers become bewildered with the appearance of special *bhāvas* because of the sound of his flute when he calls the cows. Sometimes he calls the cows without Balarāma and the cowherds, in order to give them the happiness of hearing him personally. And sometimes he is with Balarāma and the cowherds. Or sometimes he dresses as a wrestler. When the rivers develop *bhāva* even when calling the cows with the boys and Balarāma, he seems to laugh at the rivers boldly for not being fully fixed in him alone.

Or when he calls the cows with the other boys, the rivers become stunned, what to speak of when he calls the cows by himself. This means that when he calls with the others, there is some restriction in the manifestation of sweetness. Or when he calls with the cowherd boys there arises sweetness from the manifestation of special affection for the devotees.

He who plays the flute, who is skillful at playing the flute, calls the cows with great affection by their various names (*sam-āhvayati*). Mukunda means he who has teeth white like the *kunda* flowers. When he plays the flute to call the cows, he reveals the great beauty of his gleaming teeth.

O friends! You should have faith like the rivers. Or this is related because of our friendship with the rivers, since we have similar natures. Or it is a call made by Lalitā to Rādhā to help her recover from the pain of *prema*. The

rivers continue to flow in spite of all obstacles. Or this is an address to all rivers as friends. “O Gaṅgā! O Yamunā! O Sarasvatī!” The word *saritaḥ* then means the rivers around Mathurā such as Mānasa-gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī.

The rivers have broken their flow. They do not follow their husband, the ocean. Thus they ignore pious results in this life and the next. They desire just a particle (*rajas*) from his feet, brought by the wind. They desire *dāsya* from far off. This is their qualification for the dust. They desire the dust particles (*rajas* accusative for dative case). Like us, they do not have sufficient piety. Attaining it many times, they are not satisfied. They are similar to us. Though out of *prema* the flow of the rivers has stopped, because of *prema* they tremble.

Brahiṇa-stabaka can mean bunches of peacock feathers. Or *barhiṇa* can mean peacock feathers and *stabaka* can refer to bunches of flowers. *Palāśaiḥ* means leaves. *Vai* indicates a comparison. The rivers seem to desire the dust from his feet. The rivers have developed a special *bhāva* for him. The wind as a messenger has brought the dust. The rivers become stunned (*jāḍyam*). This is a *vyabhicārī-bhāva.* By the two descriptive elements concerning *prema*, trembling and being stunned, two *sāttvika-bhāvas* of *śṛṅgara-rasa* are indicated. Or the interrupted flow indicates the *sāttvika-bhāva* of being stunned. *Vepatu* is trembling, another *sāttvika-bhāva*. *Stimitāpaḥ* indicates a total lack of movement or fainting (*moha*).

Or the rivers desire *prema* in the form of his foot dust brought by the wind. They desire to attain a trace of something related to him as mercy. By the desire for *prema*, with the arousal of *bhāva* in the rivers with waves of unconscious water, the rivers develop special symptoms described. Even when the causes of the rivers coming to this condition—seeing him and hearing his flute—do not occur, this condition still results, by the power of his form and the sound of the flute.

Texts 35.8–9

anucaraiḥ samanuvarṇita-vīrya
ādi-pūruṣa ivācala-bhūtiḥ
vana-caro giri-taṭeṣu carantīr
veṇunāhvayati gāḥ sa yadā hi

vana-latās tarava ātmani viṣṇuṁ
vyañjayantya iva puṣpa-phalāḍhyāḥ
praṇata-bhāra-viṭapā madhu-dhārāḥ
prema-hṛṣṭa-tanavo vavṛṣuḥ sma

Kṛṣṇa moves about the forest in the company of his friends, who vividly chant the glories of his magnificent deeds. He thus appears as the most outstanding person, exhibiting his inexhaustible sweetness. When the cows wander onto the mountainsides and Kṛṣṇa calls out to them with the sound of his flute, the trees and creepers in the forest respond by becoming so luxuriant with fruits and flowers that they seem to be manifesting Kṛṣṇa, spread everywhere, within their hearts. As their branches bend low with the weight, the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect out of prema, and both the trees and the creepers shower sweet sap.

COMMENTARY: When the cows begin to perspire, they leave the bank of the river on lower ground and proceed to an unseen place more elevated, covered with thick forest, grazing joyfully on the grass in front of them, Kṛṣṇa calls them with his flute. What to speak of the rivers with their presiding deities being attracted, the moving beings and even the immobile creepers and trees develop special *bhāvas* on hearing the flute. That is explained in two verses.

His exploits (*vīrya*) are described continuously or after calling the cows (*anu*) in a complete manner, by his followers with whom he constantly moves (*anucaraiḥ*), expressing their affection for him through relating his pastimes.

He is like Nārāyaṇa (*ādi-puruṣaḥ*) and has fixed wealth. By wandering in the forest, he experiences the highest joy. Or he has fixed beauty. He wanders in the forest (*vanacaraḥ*) since he cannot see the cows. He wanders on uneven ground, on the slopes of hills and becomes tired. Then the best of cowherds, expert on the flute (*saḥ*), calls using his flute.

Even (*hi*) all the creepers and trees develop bliss, though they lack skill in love, being elements of the forest. Even the trees, though male, develop *bhāva*. Or he calls cows by name. These cows have names of creepers. O Mālatī! O Mallikā! O Vāsanti! O Yūthikā! The trees and creepers, confusing

the names, develop *bhāva*. The trees flow with honey. It is as if Viṣṇu who spreads everywhere was within them. This is only an analogy, since it would be inappropriate to conclude that Kṛṣṇa was the Lord. The trees and creepers become full of flowers and fruit. The external wealth is an external symptom of the presence of Viṣṇu.

Or because of the presence of Viṣṇu, their *bhāva* is suitable, expressed as a wealth of fruits and flowers. Because of Viṣṇu's presence the branches bow down. The branches are like hands holding ingredients of worship, bending low. Or the branches appear to be offering obeisances, with the tips of the branches bending low. The bark seems to burst, with hairs standing on end.

Though the flow of honey is a symptom of *prema*, the hairs standing on end is an occasional condition, though natural to creepers. This indicates outstanding *prema*. The trees release honey profusely and constantly. Another version has *sasṛjuḥ*: they produced honey, in a remarkable manner.

The boys express their affection for Kṛṣṇa by accompanying him and praising his actions. The creepers and trees out of envy desire to express their affection for the Lord and thus offer their fruits and flowers. Or how did the boys praise Kṛṣṇa? He was like Nārāyaṇa. But then, how to describe the joy of Gokula? It is much more. And this is because he has wealth or Lakṣmī at all times. Like a great treasure, Kṛṣṇa does not reveal his qualities publicly. Thus he is only "like" Nārāyaṇa.

The creepers are mentioned first since they are female like the *gopīs*, with similar *bhāvas*. The bushes shower streams of honey or the bushes, having streams of honey, shower *prema*. They distribute *prema* to persons in the past and present by their condition. The following should be said. The devotees of Kṛṣṇa are endowed with wealth and birth, resembling flowers, and sons resembling fruits. Or they are endowed with *karmas* described in the Vedas dedicated to material gains, which resemble flowers and with material enjoyment in this and next life, resembling fruits.

The bushes are similarly endowed with fruits and flowers but are endowed with humility and other good qualities. Thus they bow down along with their family members. They manifest the Lord who shines in the self, spreading as the unlimited cause externally and internally on hearing the

song, though they try to hide this. They are unable to hide this because strong *prema* has appeared. Their hairs stand on end and they shed tears. Or just as those who shed tears of *prema* spread *prema* to the people, so the shrubs flowing with honey spread *prema*. The word *iva* indicates that they try to hide the manifestation of the Lord.

Texts 35.10–11

darśanīya-tilako vana-mālā-
divya-gandha-tulasī-madhu-mattaiḥ
ali-kulair alaghu gītām abhīṣṭam
ādriyan yarhi sandhita-veṇuḥ
sarasi sārasa-haṁsa-vihaṅgāś
cāru-gītā-hṛta-cetasa etya
harim upāsata te yata-cittā
hanta mīlita-dṛśo dhṛta-maunāḥ

Maddened by the divine, sweet aroma of the tulasī flowers on the garland Kṛṣṇa wears, swarms of bees sing loudly for him, and Kṛṣṇa, decorated with new tilaka, acknowledges their song by taking his flute to his lips. At that very moment the cranes, swans and other lake-dwelling birds, their minds overcome by the attractive song, approach attractive Kṛṣṇa, close their eyes and, maintaining strict silence, fix their consciousness upon him.

COMMENTARY: As noon approaches, having entered the forest, Kṛṣṇa gives up the wrestler's dress and dons special clothing. By the soft, sweet sound of his flute, he enchants the birds inhabiting the water bodies, even though they are far away. This is explained in two verses. As the son of Nanda, best of devotees, he wears beautiful Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* made of *gaurika.* The fragrance of the *tulasī* is the very nature of the *tulasī*. The bees sing loudly or with long notes. On hearing the song of the bees, he puts his flute to his lips out of joy, to imitate their song (*ādriyan*—respecting). Or without covering the bees' song he plays the flute softly and sweetly. As soon as he places the flute on his lips, the song arises (*sandhita-veṇuḥ*). His lips are mentioned because they are the most attractive.

Sarasi is in the singular to represent a type. All the birds in the water such as *cakravākas*, cranes and swans become attracted to the song. These birds

are mentioned because they inhabit the water. *Sārasa* also means things related to *bhakti* and *haṁsa* means a person with high intelligence, like the swan that can separate milk from water. The birds are attracted to that song and approach (*upāsata*) Kṛṣṇa, famous for his attractive nature (*harim*). The birds are innumerable and inclined to play happily. *Cāru* (beautiful) can modify *gītā* or the verb. Thus they approach with movements of *prema* or worship him with devotion.

The method of worship is described along with the characteristics of having their hearts stolen. The external and internal senses concentrate only on him (*yata-cittāḥ*). The closed eyes represent all the knowledge senses or just the eyes. They stop speaking. This indicates that all the action senses have stopped functioning by the destruction of agitation. Or the eyes represent all the limbs. Mental, physical and verbal actions all stop. Or by seeing his form, they develop the highest *prema* and they faint (*yata-cittāḥ*). The cranes, living in the water like sages such as Saubhari, on hearing the flute, come to the Lord thinking he is affectionate to the most fallen. They become intoxicated with the sound and are not in a fainting state in the beginning. Or, on hearing the sweet song of the flute mixed with the humming of bees, thinking Kṛṣṇa favors entities with wings, they approach him with affection. Then, on seeing his beauty, they faint in *prema*.

Or tracing out the thief by signs, they approach and see his deceitful behavior. Out of fear and dismay, they cannot speak or do anything. They close their eyes and remain by his side.

Texts 35.12–13

saha-balaḥ srag-avataṁsa-vilāsaḥ
sānuṣu kṣiti-bhṛto vraja-devyaḥ
harṣayan yarhi veṇu-raveṇa
jāta-harṣa uparambhati viśvam
mahad-atikramaṇa-śaṅkita-cetā
manda-mandam anugarjati meghaḥ
suhṛdam abhyavarṣat sumanobhiś
chāyayā ca vidadhat pratapatram

O goddesses of Vraja, when Kṛṣṇa is enjoying himself with Balarāma on the mountain slopes, charming in appearance with a flower crown, he gives joy to all with the resonant vibrations of his flute. Thus he delights the entire world. At that time, the nearby cloud, afraid of offending a great personality, thunders very gently in accompaniment. The cloud showers flowers onto Kṛṣṇa, his dear friend, and shades him from the sun like an umbrella.

COMMENTARY: At noon on top of the plateau, he gives up his previous dress and dons a dress with many colorful garlands. He joyfully plays his flute and gives joy to the world. Understanding that the sound is superior to his own rumbling, a joyful cloud serves him as a friend, thinking of serving the whole world. Two verses describe this.

To make the sound spread through the universe, he plays his flute with Balarāma (*saha-balaḥ*). Or he plays his flute with some strength *(saha-balaḥ*). He has a garland on his head as play or is beautiful with a garland on his head. This is a cause of joy. He gives joy on plateaus of Govardhana, which protects or nourishes the earth (*kṣiti-bhṛtaḥ*). Or he is situated on plateaus of various mountains nearby. The plural is used to indicate that the sound of the flute echoes on various plateaus. The sound on the plateaus also nourishes the earth (*kṣiti-bhṛtaḥ*).

O women most worthy of worship in Vraja (*vraja-devyaḥ*). Or O women dear to Kṛṣṇa, the lord of Vraja! The sound is actually for you. Or O women, inclined to play in Vraja! You are deprived of these various pastimes. He gives joy to the world because he manifests special joy (*jāta-harṣaḥ*).

The cloud desires to rumble loudly in joy also but worries about surpassing Kṛṣṇa since the cloud is above him. Or with its sound, the cloud will drown out the sound of the flute and create offense. The cloud thinks of giving comfort to him. He thinks of Kṛṣṇa as a friend, since he is the same color or thinks of Kṛṣṇa as having a good heart in spite of his offense. Or by giving joy to the world, he is our friend, giving an unmotivated benefit. Therefore the cloud showered flowers everywhere.

Or he has a charm with his earrings and garland. Situated on plateaus, he gives joy to Govardhana. The cloud rumbles softly, as if afraid of offending a great soul. Factually, following Kṛṣṇa's desire to spread the sound

throughout the universe, the cloud rumbles after the flute sound, mixing with it, to make the flute sound louder. Or the cloud fears committing an offense against Govardhana by expressing his joy, or by covering the flute sound with his rumbling, since the flute sound was supposed to give them joy.

Or the cloud fears to commit an offense to the flute, a great devotee. The cloud showers flowers very softly (*manda-mandam*) on his friend. The cloud serves with his pleasant mental functions (*sumanobhiḥ*), with his body by providing shade and by his voice, with soft rumbling.

Texts 35.14–15

vividha-gopa-caraṇeṣu vidagdho
veṇu-vādya urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ
tava sutaḥ sati yadādhara-bimbe
datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ
savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ
śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ
kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ

O pious mother Yaśodā, your son, who is expert in all the arts of herding cows, has invented many new styles of flute-playing. When he takes his flute to his bimba-red lips and sends forth the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other chief devatās listen repeatedly to the sound. Although they are the most learned authorities, with hearts in submission, they cannot ascertain the meaning and forget everything.

COMMENTARY: As the *gopīs* are singing suddenly Yaśodā comes. Or as they sing, they think of her great devotion to Kṛṣṇa in their minds and call out to her. In describing his excellence, they show how Brahmā and other powerful, wise persons become bewildered by the sound of this flute and his pastimes, experienced as most astonishing. Two verses describe this.

He is skillful at playing with cowherds, while herding and not herding the cows. When he places the flute on his lip and produces notes, since the cowherds relish the flute playing, he gives teachings in an extraordinary

manner, as the crest jewel of cowherds. Parāśara says *gopa-veṇu-pravādakau*: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma play cowherd flutes. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) Playing the flute is sometimes done to show skill in playing as a cowherd. Or at noon, it is done to give joy to the universe. He places the flute on his red lower lip. This indicates his sweetness and beauty. In describing his excellence to his mother, the *gopīs* hide their *bhāva*. To satisfy Yaśodā, they compare his lips to the *bimba* fruit.

O Yaśodā, worshipped by the world (*sati*)! This is quite suitable for your son. Situated in their own places, the *devatās* hear the sound. As *devatās,* they are familiar with a wealth of songs sung by Gandharvas and others. Indra, Śiva and Brahmā, in order of importance, hear. Brahmā gives birth to Śiva. Others such as the *loka-pālas* are also present. Or Garuḍa and other associates of the Lord are present. Their hearts are submissive (*ānata*). They become bewildered (*kaśmalam*). They are not able to determine the notes since the notes were different. Or the nature of the flute's sound is bewildering.

Or in playing the flute, he produces plentiful notes, putting the flute to his lip. Coming close, the *devatās* listen. The *gopīs* attempt to increase Yaśodā's belief in his attractive nature, with the possibility of seeing him. As *devatās,* Brahmā and others have great intelligence. The best *yogīs* (*kavayaḥ*) like the Kumāras also bow their hearts and shoulders. Coming from their places, seeing Kṛṣṇa, they show humility in front of him. They are not able to understand with certainty about their own selves (*aniścita-tattvāḥ*), because the flute has stolen their hearts.

Or they are not certain that Brahman is the only truth. Or they cannot discern what is real because of his flute playing, for his flute playing is endowed with the highest bliss. Or because the flute playing is so attractive, they forget about the bliss of Brahman. "What is this song from a flute, so astonishingly sweet? What is this most astonishing sound which has never previously been heard?" or "What is this magical sound which completely bewilders?" By this bewilderment, becoming completely absorbed in that sound, they forget everything (*kaśmalam yayuḥ*).

Texts 35.16–17

nija-padābja-dalair dhvaja-vajra
nīrajāṅkuśa-vicitra-lalāmaiḥ
vraja-bhuvaḥ śamayan khura-todaṁ
varṣma-dhurya-gatir īḍita-veṇuḥ
vrajati tena vayaṁ sa-vilāsa
vīkṣaṇārpita-manobhava-vegāḥ
kuja-gatiṁ gamitā na vidāmaḥ
kaśmalena kavaraṁ vasanaṁ vā

As Kṛṣṇa strolls through Vraja with his lotus-petal-like feet, marking the ground with the distinctive emblems of flag, thunderbolt, lotus and elephant goad, he relieves the distress the ground feels from the cows' hooves. As he plays his renowned flute, his body moves slowly with the grace of an elephant. Thus we gopīs, who become agitated by Cupid when Kṛṣṇa playfully glances at us, stand as still as trees, unaware that our hair and garments are slackening.

COMMENTARY: Because of the sudden statement directed to Yaśodā, there is no regard for a sequence in time in reciting the verses. But his flute playing at noon can be inferred in the present verse. In great pain, the *gopīs* display their bewilderment because of great pain at the moment. That is expressed in two verses.

He is not wearing shoes and there are many footprints. His feet are like lotus petals wide at the front and narrow at the back, soft and pink. Instead of *dalaiḥ* some versions have *talaiḥ (*surfaces*).* The plural indicates many footprints or indicates respect. The footprints (and feet) have extraordinary markings. *Śaṅkha* and *cakra* marks are not mentioned since they are very famous on Viṣṇu's feet.

By those marks he removes the pain of hooves treading on the land of Govardhana and Vṛndāvana. This is because his lotus feet by their nature remove all pain. The beautiful footprints cover the hoof marks and remove all pain. Kṛṣṇa moves slowly and gracefully like the king of the elephants since he is playing the flute. Though he does this to bewilder the *gopīs*, he also does this to avoid boldness. Actually there is no injury to the earth by the cows' hooves, only an appearance of marks, since the cows are related to the Lord himself. However, the *gopīs* do not mention this since they lack

reflective powers because of their unsatisfied desires. Or the injuries to the earth are from the hooves of Dhenuka and Ariṣṭāsura. Kṛṣṇa goes from Vraja to the forest (*vrajati*) or he moves here and there.

Because of him (*tena*), our minds become agitated by his beautiful or playful (*savilāsa*) glance. We cannot prevent this. Though he may glance for some other purpose, they develop the greatest bewilderment because their desire is aroused. Thus, step by step they reveal his beauty, pastimes and sweetness. They become like trees (*kuja*), unable to move. Or because of the flute playing and because of agitation by his glance, they are not aware that their clothing has become loose. Or after hearing his flute they become agitated by his glance. From this cause, they are not aware that their clothing has become loose.

When he comes, we do not show skill and become foolish. This opposite result shows his great attractiveness and their humble position. We do not know that our hair has come undone and our clothing has become loose. *Vā* means both or "even." Though in bewilderment one loses awareness of everything related to the body, particularly the women would usually be aware of their clothes.

In the previous pairs of verses, each verse is a separate statement, but in this verse, the statement continues into the second verse. Because he comes, they become stunned. This means that because of his direct association, they become stunned.

Yaśodā went away to do chores or because of doubled suffering on hearing about the excellence of her son. When they became free of worry that she would return, out of great pain, they speak among themselves about their bewilderment in relation to their description of Brahmā's bewilderment.

The word *vicitra* indicates other astonishing marks of beauty (*lalāmaiḥ*) on his feet, like the barley corn and *cakra*. First, they became stunned and then because of bewilderment they were not aware of their clothing becoming loose.

Texts 35.18–19

maṇi-dharaḥ kvacid āgaṇayan gā
mālayā dayita-gandha-tulasyāḥ

praṇayino ’nucarasya kadāṁse
prakṣipan bhujam agāyata yatra
kvaṇita-veṇu-rava-vañcita-cittāḥ
kṛṣṇam anvasata kṛṣṇa-gṛhiṇyaḥ
guṇa-gaṇārṇam anugatya hariṇyo
gopikā iva vimukta-gṛhāśāḥ

Now Kṛṣṇa is standing somewhere counting his cows on a string of gems, calling them with his flute. He wears a garland of tulasī leaves that bear the fragrance of his beloved, and he has thrown his arm over the shoulder of an affectionate cowherd boyfriend. As Kṛṣṇa plays his flute and sings, the music attracts the black deer’s wives, who approach that ocean of qualities and sit down beside him. Just like us cowherd girls, they have given up all hope for happiness in family life.

COMMENTARY: We devoted *gopīs* have bewilderment because of his actions and beauty, but from far off even the female animals become bewildered by his fragrance and song. Or following the sequence, in the afternoon as the time to return home approaches, putting on new clothing, when he plays his flute to call the cows, even the female deer become bewildered, what to speak of us *gopīs*. Two verses describe this.

He counts the cows and bulls using pearls on rounding them up to take them back to Vraja. Though there are other animals, he counts the cows since he has a special affection for them.

kṛṣṇa-vatsair asaṅkhyātair yūthī-kṛtya sva-vatsakān
cārayanto ’rbha-līlābhir vijahrus tatra tatra ha

Along with Kṛṣṇa’s *asaṅkhya* of calves, they each put their calves in groups and, while herding them, sported in the forest in a playful spirit. SB 10.12.3

The calves are unlimited. The cows and other animals are also unlimited. Thus it is impossible to count them. However, it is possible to count according to group divisions. Or though the cows are unlimited, the cowherds must count and gather them as their duty.

The garland is made of *tulasī* leaves emitting the fragrance of the beloved. Since animals have a strong sense of smell, the doe approach because of smelling the fragrance from far off.

Kṛṣṇa has his left arm on the shoulder of a friend. This shows affection and a place for pastimes. In playing his flute, he generally assumes a position with three bends. His left arm is embracing his friend around his neck. That friend has *prema* and is most fortunate, whereas we are not. He has finished playing his flute at this time.

Kvaṇita indicates the flute's natural ability to make sounds. *Rava* indicates making a slight sound once. The sound does not depend on making songs with varieties of sweet notes. By its nature the sound is always sweet but in a song the sweetness becomes perfect. Thus the verse says *agāyata* (he sings). Or first he sings and then plays the flute with special *rasa*.

Their hearts are endowed with that sound or tricked by that sound, otherwise they would not stand there with bewildered hearts. The does are there with their husbands (*kṛṣṇa-gṛhiṇyaḥ*). But they leave their husbands and become followers of Kṛṣṇa, since he is an ocean of all qualities. They approach or follow him (*anugatā*). As a pun, they have become Kṛṣṇa's wives (*kṛṣṇa-gṛhiṇyaḥ*). They, like us, are completely free of desires for things related to the house (*vimukta*).

Or they have attained freedom from the house.

Bewildered by his clothing, pastimes and flute, following him, endowed with unlimited qualities, giving up unqualified husbands, the doe have attained him as a husband, without desire for house, body, children or wealth. Pale from separation, we should do the same. They do not mention "we" but "cowherd women" to indicate that they are of the same type as Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd. Or using the word *gopikāḥ* nourishes *rasa* more than the word "we." *Gopikā* also means "those who protect their bodies." Otherwise, out of separation they would die. Or the does are worthy of following (*anugatya-hariṇyaḥ*), but he causes such bewilderment that they follow him instead of his following them.

Texts 35.20–21

kunda-dāma-kṛta-kautuka-veṣo
gopa-godhana-vṛto yamunāyām
nanda-sūnur anaghe tava vatso
narma-daḥ praṇayiṇāṁ vijahāra

manda-vāyur upavāty anukūlaṁ
mānayan malayaja-sparśena
vandinas tam upadeva-gaṇā ye
vādya-gīta-balibhiḥ parivavruḥ

O sinless Yaśodā, your darling child, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, has festively enhanced his attire with a jasmine garland, and he is now playing along the Yamunā in the company of the cows and cowherd boys, amusing his dear companions. The gentle breeze honors him with its soothing fragrance of sandalwood, while the various minor devatās, standing on all sides like panegyrists, offer their music, singing, and gifts of tribute.

COMMENTARY: Yaśodā returns, desiring to hear about the excellence of her son again, after recovering. Or the *gopīs* approach her to help her recover by giving news of her son's return, since she is suffering in separation. This is described in two verses.

He is decorated with jasmines in his hair for joyful playing (*kautuka*). It is understood that he has changed his clothing. He is surrounded by a wealth of cows and cowherds, unlike any other person. On returning home in the afternoon, the cowherds are tired from playing all day. To give them relief and to have the cows drink their last water, he goes to the Yamunā. To give bliss to both parents, they say "son of Nanda" and "your son." *Tava vatsaḥ* (your son) indicates her great affection (*vātsalya*). O Yaśodā, with no knowledge of any suffering (*anaghe*) or who is free of suffering because of your great affection! This is in comparison to others. In time, he will return, and you and we shall be free of suffering. This is humility natural to great *prema*. He is playing in the water or on the bank of the Yamunā because he jokes with his friends filled with affection. These are causes of his delay in entering Vraja. The description of his friends indicates some jealousy on their part.

The wind blows affectionately (*anukūlam*). The slow (*manda*) breeze suggests it is heavily endowed with fragrance to give joy to the suffering *gopīs*. It blows from the south (*malayajaḥ*), being gentle, fragrant and cool. The Vidyādharas and all other *devatās* surround him. Singing should be

first, though the order mentioned has instrumental music first. This could be a writing error. There is a version with *gīta-vādya*.

He appears (*veṣaḥ*) joyful (*kautuka*) with jasmine garlands. For playing in the dark water of the Yamunā he changes to clothes white with jasmine garlands. He is a son who gives joy (*nanda-sutaḥ*). Just as a cow shows affection to its new born calf, Yaśodā is affection to Kṛṣṇa (*vatsaḥ*).

The wind blows near (*upavāti*). It is fragrant with a touch of sandalwood (*malayaja*), coming from the south. This indicates the spring season, which has jasmines. Vṛndāvana is endowed with all seasons. Or the wind blows cool or warm depending on the pastimes in the *rāsa* dance, just as the full moon always shines during the *rāsa* dance. By the singing, everything is adjusted properly on all days. The *vandīs* of Gokula come first. They and the *devatās* surround Kṛṣṇa, performing their services. They also offer scents, flowers, cloth and ornaments.

Texts 35.22–23

vatsalo vraja-gavāṁ yad aga-dhro
vandyamāna-caraṇaḥ pathi vṛddhaiḥ
kṛtsna-go-dhanam upohya dinānte
gīta-veṇur anugeḍita-kīrtiḥ
utsavaṁ śrama-rucāpi dṛśīnām
unnayan khura-rajaś-churita-srak
ditsayaiti suhṛd-āsiṣa eṣa
devakī-jaṭhara-bhūr uḍu-rājaḥ

Out of great affection for the cows of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa became the lifter of Govardhana Hill. At the end of the day, having rounded up all his cows, he plays a song on His flute, while exalted devatās standing along the path worship his lotus feet and the cowherd boys accompanying him chant his glories. He wears a garland covered with dust raised by the cows' hooves, and his beauty, enhanced by his fatigue, creates joy for everyone's eyes. Eager to fulfill his friends' desires, he arrives. Kṛṣṇa is the moon which has arisen from the womb of mother Yaśodā.

COMMENTARY: The *gopīs* speak among themselves as previously while Yaśodā becomes absorbed in preparing a meal for Kṛṣṇa. The *devatās*

worship his feet on the path since they do not get this opportunity when he enters Vraja. The present tense is used to indicate that they do not stop the worship. The descriptions given in the verses occur daily with Kṛṣṇa and his friends, or going there on different occasions they see him directly. The wealth of the cows are together since it is the end of the day. The word "wealth" is uttered with hatred because he is attached to herding the cows during the day (ignoring the *gopīs*). He plays the flute to gather the cows and to announce that he is coming to Vraja. His friends glorify him by reciting his pastimes such as killing Pūtanā or the pastimes of that particular day. Or they glorify him to remove the suffering they experience at night because of separation from him, just as the *gopīs* suffer separation during the day.

He creates joy for the eyes of all, or for the *gopīs*. They do not mention themselves directly to avoid bold behavior on their part. The beauty of his fatigue consists of the perspiration on his face and his dried lips. Though it is possible that the dust from buffalos or other animals could also settle on his garland, here it refers to the dust that came from cows' hooves, since they are closest to him. That dust is considered auspicious. Since it is obvious, they do not mention the cows directly. The garland alone is mentioned but it is inferred that his locks of hair were also covered with dust.

He desires to fulfill the wishes of all his friends (*gopīs* are not specifically mentioned). As he has come close, they point to him with their fingers (*eṣaḥ*). He appeared in Devakī's womb, but was the son of Yaśodā since she raised him. Or Devakī can also mean Yaśodā. This was previously explained. He is the moon because he mitigates the *gopīs'* suffering experienced during the day. Because Kṛṣṇa was born there, the womb is *viśuddha-sattva*, most pure. The milk ocean is suggested.

He is most affectionate to all the cows, bullocks and calves. At the end of the day, he gathers all the cows with effort since they are a treasure. His actions cannot be limited by praises (*vandyamāna-caraṇaḥ*). Nanda and the elders have approached on the road. Or his forest pastimes are worshipped by priests and elder cowherds with knowledge. He is beautiful even with his fatigue. He desires to satisfy his friends or all the *gopīs*. He is

the king of the stars: he is the master of the *gopīs* or is surrounded by his friends. The example is suitable for all. This is Citsukha's explanation.

Texts 35.24–25

mada-vighūrṇita-locana īṣat
māna-daḥ sva-suhṛdāṁ vana-mālī
badara-pāṇḍu-vadano mṛdu-gaṇḍaṁ
maṇḍayan kanaka-kuṇḍala-lakṣmyā
yadu-patir dvirada-rāja-vihāro
yāminī-patir ivaiṣa dinānte
mudita-vaktra upayāti durantaṁ
mocayan vraja-gavāṁ dina-tāpam

As Kṛṣṇa respectfully greets his well-wishing friends, his eyes roll slightly as if from intoxication. He wears a flower garland, and decorates his tender cheeks with the brilliance of his golden earrings. His face is as pale as a badara berry. With a cheerful face, the master of the cowherds, moving with the grace of a regal elephant, like the rising moon in the evening, returns in the evening, relieving the cows and Vraja from the pain experienced during the day.

COMMENTARY: His eyes roll slightly from joy or intoxication. That is natural to him, but particularly because of seeing the *gopīs*. They roll with variety (*vi-ghūrṇa*). This indicates the beauty of his eyes. He offers respect to the feet of his mother and father. Or he personally acknowledges the *gopīs*, by glancing everywhere and rolling his eyes.

Or he breaks the pride of the *gopīs* by not returning quickly, because of playing for a long time with the cowherd boys. He wears a jasmine garland extending to his feet, to give joy to the cowherds and cows. His cheeks are soft, without whiskers, since he is of *kaiśora* age. He decorates his tender cheeks with earrings. Naturally, the earrings and his cheeks combine, but because the earrings sway slowly when he walks, they touch his cheeks. As the lord of the Yadus, the Yadus gave mercy to the people of Vraja by having him stay there. Or *yadu-pati* can mean lord of the cowherds. This is stated in *Skanda Purāṇa.* He is the lord of the cowherds by manifesting great qualities. He appeared in their family for this purpose.

He has a joyful face—with smiles and glances. This indicates that special *bhāva* has arisen in him.

He frees the cows of their continual suffering. Or he wears a garland of flowers and leaves. This indicates his great beauty in his forest dress. It is understood that he has a peacock feather on his head and wears earrings. As well, he wears a long *guñja* necklace, as described previously. He has given up his previous dress and now wears a different costume. Because his desires are not completely fulfilled, he slightly gives respect to his friends. His face is pale because they consider that he also suffers from separation, like them. Or he actually has a face pale from separation.

Because he walks like an elephant, his earrings touch his cheeks. The earrings are like Lakṣmī kissing his cheeks. He frees the cows of Vraja from their distress by letting them meet their calves. This is unlike us. Just as the moon rises at the end of day and meets the night after separation during the day, and is pale because of separation, so Kṛṣṇa appears at the end of the day, pale from separation and meets us. The moon is also lord of the Yadus since the Yadu dynasty begins with the moon. He causes people's faces to become joyful (*mudita-vaktraḥ*) since he takes away their sorrow experienced during the day. He takes away suffering experienced during the day for the eyes (*gavām*) of the living entities (*vraja*).

Text 35.26

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ vraja-striyo rājan kṛṣṇa-līlānugāyatīḥ
remire 'haḥsu tac-cittās tan-manaskā mahodayāḥ

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, thus during the daytime the women of Vṛndāvana took pleasure in continuously singing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and those ladies' minds and hearts, absorbed in him, were filled with great festivity.

COMMENTARY: This is the conclusion. O King! He pacifies Parīkṣit, overcome with *prema* on hearing the *gopīs'* song. They sang about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the form of highest bliss: his pastimes are also the form of the highest bliss. In the daytime, a time of suffering, the *gopīs* became happy (*remire*) because their minds were absorbed in him.

Or in the manner just described, they became happy or they sang many pastimes like this (*evam*).

Because their hearts and minds were absorbed in him, they suffered in *prema* at all times. By singing about his pastimes, Kṛṣṇa directly appeared to them (*mahodayāḥ*). They sang when he returned at the end of the day. By singing of his form and pastimes and absorbing their hearts in him, during the day he manifested himself as if in person, though he was not present. At night however, they directly saw him and experienced happiness. In talks to gain relief from the pain during the day, this is not mentioned.

Or they passed the day in singing constantly. In the night they became happy by directly seeing him. By singing in this way, they became happy with directly seeing him (*mahān*). There are three pairs each, describing morning, noon and afternoon pastimes, making nine pairs. One pair of verses is directed to Yaśodā. One pair of verses describes their own position. At the very end there is one pair of verses expressing joy on his coming. The song is thus twelve pairs.

Chapter Thirty-six
The Slaying of Ariṣṭa, the Bull Demon

Text 36.1

śrī bādarāyaṇir uvāca
atha tarhy āgato goṣṭham ariṣṭo vṛṣabhāsuraḥ
mahīm mahā-kakut-kāyaḥ kampayan khura-vikṣatām

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The demon Ariṣṭa then came to the cowherd village. Appearing in the form of a bull with a large hump, he made the earth tremble as he tore it apart with his hooves.

COMMENTARY: With obedient heart, I offer respects to the great devotees, who are overjoyed with *prema* from just a relationship with the speck of dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

The description continues in the next verse. Then, in the evening when Kṛṣṇa returned, as previously described, Ariṣṭa arrived. Or *atha* indicates that the present topic concerning killing Ariṣṭāsura, and after that, Kṛṣṇa's departure to Mathurā, are very different from the pastimes of bliss in Gokula. In the evening, when Kṛṣṇa returned to Vraja (*tarhi*), the demon came there.

prodoṣārdhe kadācit tu rāsāsakte janārdane
trāsayan sa-mado goṣṭham ariṣṭaḥ sampāgataḥ

Once, midway through the period of dusk, when Kṛṣṇa was eager to perform the *rāsa* dance, Ariṣṭāsura madly entered the cowherd village, terrifying everyone. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

This is also described in *Hari-vaṁśa.* After the *gopīs* sang about his pastimes to get relief from the pain of separation, on some evening the demon came. His name means "inauspicious for the cows." He had the form of a bull. Because of his huge form, his hooves broke the earth.

Text 36.2

rambhamāṇaḥ kharataraṁ padā ca vilikhan mahīm
udyamya pucchaṁ vaprāṇi viṣāṇāgreṇa coddharan
kiñcit kiñcic chakṛn muñcan mūtrayan stabdha-locanaḥ

Ariṣṭāsura bellowed very harshly and pawed the ground. With his tail raised and his eyes glaring, he began to tear up the embankments with the tips of his horns, every now and then passing a little stool and urine.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He made furrows in the earth with his hooves as he tore up the soil because of his crazed condition and desire to fight.

Texts 36.3–4

yasya nirhrāditenāṅga niṣṭhureṇa gavāṁ nṛṇām
patanty akālato garbhāḥ sravanti sma bhayena vai
nirviśanti ghanā yasya kakudy acala-śaṅkayā
taṁ tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgam udvīkṣya gopyo gopāś ca tatrasuḥ

My dear King, clouds hovered about sharp-horned Ariṣṭāsura's hump, mistaking it for a mountain, and when the cowherd men and ladies caught sight of the demon, they were struck with terror. Indeed, the strident reverberation of his roar so frightened the pregnant cows and women that they lost their fetuses in miscarriages.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The great fear caused by the demon is described. His roaring seemed to crush Vraja. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit (*aṅga*) with fear. *Sma* indicates that it was well known and *vai* means certainly. The word *mahā* mentioned previously indicates his size. He had a huge hump upon which the cloud, mistaking it for a mountain, rested. This is a metaphor since the cloud is unconscious. His hump and a mountain were both high, reaching the clouds. What to speak of the women, who are easily frightened by their nature, the men were also terrified.

sa toyatoyada-cchāyas tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgo 'rka-locanaḥ
lelihānaḥ saniṣpeṣaṁ jihvayoṣṭhau punaḥ punaḥ
saṁraṁbhāviddha-lāṅgūlaḥ kaṭhinas kandha-bandhanaḥ
udagra-kakudābhoga-pramāṇo dur-atikramaḥ
viṇmūtra-lipta-pṛṣṭhāṅgo gavam udvega-kārakaḥ

pralaṁba-kaṇṭho ’timukhas tarughātāṅkitānanaḥ
sūdayaṁs tāpasān ugro vanān aṭati yaḥ sadā

He had the complexion of a cloud and had sharp horns and eyes blazing like the sun. He repeatedly licked his lips with sound. He twirled his tail in pride. His shoulders were tough and his hump was huge and impossible to pass over. His body was smeared with urine and dung. He caused panic in the cows. Skin hung from his throat. His face was scarred by being hit by trees. He always wandered in the forest to attack the sages doing austerities. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The people had to look upwards (*udvīkṣya*) to see him, since he was huge. The animals were frightened because of his evil nature.

yuddha-sajja-viṣāṇāgro dviṣad vṛṣabha-sūdanaḥ
ariṣṭo nāma hi gavām ariṣto dāruṇākṛtiḥ
daityo vṛṣabha-rūpeṇa gokulaṁ paridhāvati
pātayāno gavāṁ garbhān dhṛṣṭo gacchaty anārtavam
bhañjamānaś ca capalo goṣṭaṁ saṁpraccāra ha
śṛṅga-praharaṇo raudraḥ praharan goṣu durmadaḥ
goṣṭhe tu na ratīm lebhe vinā yuddhena go-vṛṣaḥ

The demon named Ariṣṭa, killer of bulls and enemy of the cows, with frightful form and with huge horns for fighting, ran around Gokula. He made the cows abort and become barren. He wandered through the village, breaking everything. With anger he attacked the cows with his horns. He was not satisfied, since he could not fight. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The demon had not come to Vraja up to this time, because Kaṁsa had not permitted him.

Text 36.5

paśavo dudruvur bhītā rājan santyajya go-kulam
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti te sarve govindaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayuḥ

The domestic animals fled the pasture in fear, O King, and all the inhabitants rushed to Lord Govinda for shelter, crying, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!”

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The animals left Vraja, though they should not have done so in the evening, out of great fear. They were pursued by the demon as they fled. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in astonishment at what happened or from fear. They called out to Kṛṣṇa who was called Govinda because he had been enthroned as the king of Gokula with that name. Thus they took shelter of him. They approached him as he was coming from Govardhana where there was a place for the *rāsa* dance, because he heard the commotion. They shouted only his name, since they could say nothing else out of great fear. This was how they all acted.

Text 36.6

bhagavān api tad vīkṣya go-kulaṁ bhaya-vidrutam
mā bhaiṣṭeti girāśvāsya vṛṣāsuram upāhvayat

When the Supreme Lord saw the cowherd community distraught and fleeing in fear, he calmed them, saying, "Don't be afraid." Then he called the bull demon towards him, away from Vraja.

COMMENTARY: Govinda however (*api*) acted differently. Another version has *atha* (then, after Ariṣṭa arrived) instead of *api.* Seeing all beings of Gokula, whom he should protect, he spoke to the demon (*vṛṣāsuram*). They were fleeing here and there in fear at great speed. Or only the herds of cows fled in fear. But the cowherds, women and cows all surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. Knowing he was a demon in the form of a bull, Kṛṣṇa called out to him at close range (*upa*).

Text 36.7

gopālaiḥ paśubhir manda trāsitaiḥ kim asattama
mayi śāstari duṣṭānāṁ tvad-vidhānāṁ durātmanām

You fool! What do you think you're doing, you wicked rascal, frightening the cowherd community and their animals when I am here just to punish corrupt miscreants like you!

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa's words to the demon are described. Another version has *sapālaiḥ* (along with the cowherds). This indicates that the cows are the main

entities that should not be frightened since they have less intelligence and strength than their protectors, the cowherds. You are a fool (*manda*), since you are frightening animals! There will be no result from frightening these animals and their protectors. “Why do you say this?” I am the punisher of evil persons like you. Another version has *bala-darpahāhām*: I am the destroyer of strength and fear in persons having wicked acts (*duṣṭānām*) and wicked minds (*durātmanām*). When I kill you, everyone will be without fear. You are this type of person (*tad-vidhānām*), to be punished. Even one who imitates the behavior of the wicked should be punished. “But I have the form of a bull. How can I be punished?” You are the worst (*asattama*)! You are not a bull but actually a demon in disguise.

Text 36.8

ity āsphotyācyuto ’riṣṭaṁ tala-śabdena kopayan
sakhyur aṁse bhujābhogaṁ prasāryāvasthito hariḥ

Having spoken these words, without moving an inch, Kṛṣṇa slapped his arms with his palms, further angering Ariṣṭa with the loud sound. Then appearing most attractive, he casually threw his mighty, serpentine arm over the shoulder of a friend and stood facing the demon.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa put his arm on the shoulder of his friend Śrīdāmā, showing disrespect to the demon. His arm was like a snake because of its roundness and thickness. Kṛṣṇa is called *acyutaḥ* since he did not move from that spot. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *tasmāt sthānān na vyacalat kṛṣṇo girir ivācalaḥ*: Kṛṣṇa did not move from the spot, being as immovable as a mountain. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *na cācala tataḥ sthānād avajñāsmita līlayā:* he did not move from the spot and smiled with disrespect in a casual manner. In this situation, Kṛṣṇa was very attractive (*hariḥ*).

Text 36.9

so ’py evaṁ kopito ’riṣṭaḥ khureṇāvanim ullikhan
udyat-puccha-bhraman-meghaḥ kruddhaḥ kṛṣṇam upādravat

Thus provoked, Ariṣṭa pawed the ground with one of his hooves and then, dispersing clouds with his upraised tail, angrily charged Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Ariṣṭa was the very form of inauspiciousness (*ariṣṭaḥ*), whom no one could oppose. With his upraised tail he made the clouds move here and there by touching them or by the tail's wind. The tail was hard, long and strong. He ran at Kṛṣṇa, who attracted him by inciting his anger. Or Kṛṣṇa attracted him by striking his heel on the ground, to show his great courage and pride. This produced Ariṣṭa-kuṇḍa. It is said:

ghātavyitvā tatas tasmin ariṣṭaṁ vṛṣa-rūpiṇam
kopena pāṛṣni-ghātena mahyās tīrthaṁ pravrtitam

He struck Ariṣṭa in the form of a bull. Then in anger he struck the earth with his heel. This produced the *tīrtha. Ādi-varāha Purāṇa*

The demon approached Kṛṣṇa with great speed.

Text 36.10

agra-nyasta-viṣāṇāgraḥ stabdhāsṛg-locano 'cyutam
kaṭākṣipyādravat tūrṇam indra-mukto 'śanir yathā

Pointing the tips of his horns straight ahead and glaring menacingly at Kṛṣṇa from the corners of his bloodshot eyes, Ariṣṭa rushed toward him at full speed, like a thunderbolt hurled by Indra.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse describes the demon's attack. Instead of *kaṭākṣa akṣipya* the phrase is *kaṭā akṣipya.* This is similar to the verb *kuṭa* (to be crooked) as described in *gāṅkuṭādibhyo 'ñṇinṅ it* (*Pāṇini* 1.2.1). The demon threw a side glance. In advancing quickly and not tolerating others, an example is given. He was like a thunderbolt thrown with force by Indra.

Text 36.11

gṛhītvā śṛṅgayos taṁ vā aṣṭādaśa padāni saḥ
pratyapovāha bhagavān gajaḥ prati-gajaṁ yathā

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa seized Ariṣṭāsura by the horns and threw him back eighteen steps, just as an elephant might do when fighting a rival

elephant.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Vai means it is well known. He had a very sporting nature (*saḥ*). An example is given to show this: an elephant fighting another elephant. It shows his capability, with a display of his power.

Text 36.12

so 'paviddho bhagavatā punar utthāya satvaram
āpatat svinna-sarvāṅgo niḥśvasan krodha-mūrcchitaḥ

Thus repulsed by the Supreme Lord, the bull demon got up and, breathing hard and sweating all over his body, again charged him in a mindless rage.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The demon quickly (*satvaram*) got up. Another version has *satvaraḥ san*. In anger he forgot himself. All his limbs were exhausted (*khinna*) because of fatigue or anger. Another version has *svinna* (perspiring).

Text 36.13

tam āpatantaṁ sa nigṛhya śṛṅgayoḥ
padā samākramya nipātya bhū-tale
niṣpīḍayām āsa yathārdram ambaraṁ
kṛtvā viṣāṇena jaghāna so 'patat

As Ariṣṭa attacked, Kṛṣṇa seized him by the horns and knocked him to the ground with his foot. He then thrashed him as if he were a wet cloth, and finally uprooted one of the demon's horns and struck him with it until he died.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Two verses (13-14) describe with joy the killing of the demon. *Kṛtvā* means he uprooted his horn. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes this. *Utpāṭya śṛṅgam ekaṁ ca tena vā tāḍayat tathā*: he uprooted one horn and beat the demon with

it. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *śṛṅgaṁ cāsya punaḥ savyam utpāṭya yama-daṇḍavat tenaiva prāharat vaktraṁ sa mamāra vṛṣo hataḥ*: he uprooted his left horn and beat his head with it as if it were Yamarāja's staff and the beaten bull then died. *Apatat* means he died.

Text 36.14

asṛg vaman mūtra-śakṛt samutsṛjan
kṣipaṁś ca pādān anavasthitekṣaṇaḥ
jagāma kṛcchraṁ nirṛter atha kṣayaṁ
puṣpaiḥ kiranto harim īḍire surāḥ

Vomiting blood and profusely excreting stool and urine, kicking his legs and rolling his eyes about, Ariṣṭāsura thus went painfully to the abode of death. After this, the *devatās* honored Kṛṣṇa by scattering flowers upon him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His death is described. He actually bled and released urine and stool bit by bit in the fighting. This verse describes that condition. Śukadeva speaks in anger in saying that the demon went to the abode of Yama. However actually he attained liberation as described in SB 2.7.34. Or the statement can mean "On dying (*nirṛteḥ*) he went to the abode (*kṣayam*) of the Lord." After his death (*atha*), the *devatās* praised him. They could not do this immediately since they were afraid.

Text 36.15

evaṁ kukudminaṁ hatvā stūyamānaḥ svajātibhiḥ
viveśa goṣṭhaṁ sa-balo gopīnāṁ nayanotsavaḥ

Having thus killed the bull demon Ariṣṭa, he who is a joy for the gopīs' eyes entered the cowherd village with Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: He was praised by the cowherds (*svajātibhiḥ*). He was pleased by their praise. He had gone outside of the village to kill Ariṣṭa, and thus now entered the village. Previously, it was said that Ariṣṭa came to the village. This means he came near the village. Or thinking of causing a great disturbance, he entered the village. Balarāma had come with Kṛṣṇa, out of

affection for his younger brother, to see the demon being killed. He was a joy for their eyes. Without seeing him, how could they experience any happiness at all? When he went away to kill the demon, they felt great sorrow and when he returned after killing him, they felt great happiness. Or they felt greatly happy on seeing him affectionately after he killed the demon. That night he performed the *rāsa* dance.

sa copendro vṛṣaṁ hatvā kānta-candre niśāmukhe
aravindābha-nayanaḥ punar eva rarāma ha

Having killed the bull, lotus eyed Kṛṣṇa again enjoyed in the moonlit night. *Hari-vaṁśa*

On striking his heel to the earth, Ariṣṭa-kuṇḍa was formed. Because he had killed a bull, Rādhā joked. He then created another *kuṇḍa* to satisfy her, famous as Rādhā-kuṇḍa, honored by the whole world. This is described in *Varāha Purāṇa*. Both *kuṇḍas* are still present near Govardhana.

Text 36.16

ariṣṭe nihate daitye kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmaṇā
kaṁsāyāthāha bhagavān nārado deva-darśanaḥ

After Ariṣṭāsura had been killed by Kṛṣṇa, who acts wonderfully, Nārada Muni went to speak to King Kaṁsa. That powerful sage of godly vision addressed the king as follows.

COMMENTARY: Nārada went to Kaṁsa to relate the astonishing activities in the village, after Kṛṣṇa killed Ariṣṭa. Or he told him of Kṛṣṇa's killing Pūtanā and others. He went after Ariṣṭa was killed (*atha*).

The pastimes of Gokula were almost complete. The Yādavas were suffering and the *devatās* were disturbed. Kaṁsa had to be killed. The opportunity now occurred. I will make this happen: Kaṁsa should bring Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā and Kṛṣṇa will then kill him. This was because Nārada was omniscient (*bhagavān*). He was an *avatāra* of the Lord, or he was similar to the Lord because he was a great devotee. He also knew that the pastimes of Vraja continue eternally, though hidden. Therefore, one should not hate Nārada. Or *deva-darśana* means he sees the *devatās.* To fulfill the goal since he is the sage among the *devatās*, he did this.

Text 36.17

yaśodāyāḥ sutāṁ kanyāṁ devakyāḥ kṛṣṇam eva ca
rāmaṁ ca rohiṇī-putraṁ vasudevena bibhyatā
nyastau sva-mitre nande vai yābhyāṁ te puruṣā hatāḥ

[Nārada told Kaṁsa:] Yaśodā's child was actually a daughter, and Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī. Also, Balarāma is the son of Rohiṇī. Out of fear, Vasudeva entrusted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to his friend Nanda Mahārāja, and it is these two boys who have killed your men.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though he is the son of Rohiṇī, Balarāma was actually in the womb of Devakī first. Nārada explained this. Out of fear, Vasudeva entrusted the children to Nanda. Since he is afraid of you, you should not kill him. Nanda is Vasudeva's friend (*sva-mitre*). They have very strong ties of affection, or they are friends (*mitre*) and relatives (*sva*). *Vai* means that it is well known. Since you do not know about this, you are foolish. Nārada spoke in this way to gain Kaṁsa's trust. They have killed your friends (*puruṣāḥ*). He makes this statement to testify to the facts he has just related. By indicating the two boys' great strength, he made Kaṁsa constantly frightened of them.

Text 36.18

niśamya tad bhoja-patiḥ kopāt pracalitendriyaḥ
niśātam asim ādatta vasudeva-jighāṁsayā

Upon hearing this, the master of the Bhojas became furious with agitated senses. He picked up a sharp sword to kill Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY: *Bhoja-pati* suggests Kaṁsa had great power. Also he was the best of enjoyers. Having many desires, he had little intelligence. His senses and mind became agitated. This means he lost all power of discrimination.

Text 36.19

nivārito nāradena tat-sutau mṛtyum ātmanaḥ
jñātvā loha-mayaiḥ pāśair babandha saha bhāryayā

But Nārada restrained Kaṁsa by reminding him that it was the two sons of Vasudeva who would cause his death. Kaṁsa then had Vasudeva and his wife shackled in iron chains.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"If you kill his father you should expect that he will go into hiding somewhere." Nārada advised him that, by binding Devakī and Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would come to Mathurā immediately to free them. He bound Devakī also in order to hasten Kṛṣṇa coming or out of his evil nature.

Text 36.20

pratiyāte tu devarṣau kaṁsa ābhāṣya keśinam
preṣayām āsa hanyetāṁ bhavatā rāma-keśavau

After Nārada left, King Kaṁsa summoned Keśī and ordered him, "Go kill Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa."

COMMENTARY: He gave instructions to Keśī after Nārada left, since he feared that sending Keśī would be breaking Nārada's instructions or that Nārada would prevent him from sending Keśī. He called him (*ābhāṣya*) saying "O my brother! O great warrior!" According to Parāśara and Vaiśampāyana, he gave instructions to Keśī through messengers.

He respected Keśī by addressing him as *bhavatā. Rāma* means he who enjoys in Gokula. *Mādhava* (instead of *keśava*) means he who appeared in Madhu's dynasty. Or the two words mean those two who gave up their friends and enjoy in Gokula. He finds fault with them and does not say their names directly out of hatred. Or since their names are well known he addresses them with disrespect.

Text 36.21

tato muṣṭika-cāṇūra śala-tośalakādikān
amātyān hastipāṁś caiva samāhūyāha bhoja-rāṭ

The king of the Bhojas next called for his ministers, headed by Muṣṭika, Cāṇūra, Śala and Tośala, and also for his elephant-keepers. The king addressed them as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kaṁsa called for his ministers with respect (*sam-āhūya*) and then engaged them.

Texts 36.22–23

bho bho niśamyatām etad vīra-cāṇūra-muṣṭikau
nanda-vraje kilāsāte sutāv ānakadundubheḥ
rāma-kṛṣṇau tato mahyaṁ mṛtyuḥ kila nidarśitaḥ
bhavadbhyām iha samprāptau hanyetāṁ malla-līlayā

My dear heroic Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, please hear this. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the sons of Vasudeva, are living in Nanda's cowherd village. It has been predicted that these two boys will be the cause of my death. When they are brought here, kill them on the pretext of engaging them in a wrestling match.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He repeats the words *bho bho* so that they pay attention. Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika were his main ministers so he addresses them. He calls them courageous (*vīra*) to incite them. The singular form (*vīra*) is approved by Śrīdhara Svāmī. The plural form *vīrāḥ* is also seen. O courageous warriors! O Cāṇūra! O Muṣṭika! *Kila* means certainly. The statement is supported by Nārada's words. Nārada had told Kaṁsa about the arrangements before the birth of Kṛṣṇa. "Nārada has said that I will certainly (*kila*) die because of these two. They should be brought here since in Vraja you will not be able to kill them because of the strength of the place. Kill them *(hanyetām*) through a wrestling match. Otherwise it will be impossible to kill them." There is another meaning however. They should be brought here (*hanyetām*).

Text 36.24

mañcāḥ kriyantāṁ vividhā malla-raṅga-pariśritāḥ
paurā jānapadāḥ sarve paśyantu svaira-saṁyugam

Erect a wrestling ring with many surrounding viewing stands, and bring all the residents of the city and the outlying districts to see the open competition.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

To fool them you should arrange a festival with many pavilions, of different types suitable for the kings and ministers, which will surround the wrestling arena. By this, the city people and people from other places will see the contest which is not arranged by force but free will. Inviting everyone was another way of disguising his motives.

Text 36.25

mahāmātra tvayā bhadra raṅga-dvāry upanīyatām
dvipaḥ kuvalayāpīḍo jahi tena mamāhitau

You, elephant-keeper, my good man, should position the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa at the entrance to the wrestling arena and have him kill my two enemies.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He thought that he would please his dear wrestlers by exhausting Kṛṣṇa through a fight with the mad elephant. Internally however he was frightened. O skillful one (*bhadra*)! By this he encourages the elephant-keeper. He tells the keeper what he has personally heard from Nārada. According to *Hari-vaṁśa* the demon Drumila, king of Saubha, disguised himself as Ugrasena and bore Kaṁsa through Ugrasena's wife. Bring Kṛṣṇa near the gate. It was the custom to have the king's riding elephants near the gate. Kaṁsa's real intention was that because it was a narrow place it would be easy to kill (*jāhi*) Kṛṣṇa there. *Jāhi* also means "bring him there."

Text 36.26

ārabhyatāṁ dhanur-yāgaś caturdaśyāṁ yathā-vidhi
viśasantu paśūn medhyān bhūta-rājāya mīḍhuṣe

Commence the bow sacrifice on the Caturdaśī day in accordance with the relevant Vedic injunctions. In ritual slaughter offer the appropriate kinds

of animals to the magnanimous Śiva.

COMMENTARY: We should not only use material means. We should use supernatural means also to lure them. The two should be brought on the occasion of a spiritual festival, on the pretext of seeing wrestling matches. Śiva was the protector of Mathurā and the bow. He was very generous (*mīḍhuṣe*). *Mīḍhuṣe* means "unto Śiva who gives satisfaction by bestowing boons." This is also a statement made out of fear.

Text 36.27

ity ājñāpyārtha-tantra-jña āhūya yadu-puṅgavam
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ tato 'krūram uvāca ha

Having thus commanded his ministers, Kaṁsa next called for Akrūra, the most eminent of the Yadus. Kaṁsa knew scriptures concerning artha, and thus he took Akrūra's hand in his own and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kaṁsa knew the conclusions (*tantra*) about *artha*, material benefits, or the scriptures concerning them, but not the scriptures about *dharma*. Akrūra was the most trustworthy of the Yadus (*yadu-puṅgavam*). Therefore he was suitable to go. He called him, not because he was Kaṁsa's man, but because Akrūra could deliberate on matters skillfully. He held Akrūra's hand to show affection and to make sure that he would not tell others what he would say. He spoke to him among his own people, not others (*tataḥ* or *tatra*). *Ha* means he spoke clearly.

Text 36.28

bho bho dāna-pate mahyaṁ kriyatāṁ maitram ādṛtaḥ
nānyas tvatto hitatamo vidyate bhoja-vṛṣṇiṣu

My dear Akrūra, most charitable one, please do me a friendly favor, since I respect you. Among the Bhojas and Vṛṣṇis, there is no one else as kind to us as you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kaṁsa repeats *bho bho* out of respect. O best of the generous (*dāna-pate*)! You must do something for my benefit! You should do what is worthy of a friend. “O king of the Bhojas! Why do you send me?” You are the order bearer among all the Yadus. I respect you.

Text 36.29

atas tvām āśritaḥ saumya kārya-gaurava-sādhanam
yathendro viṣṇum āśritya svārtham adhyagamad vibhuḥ

Gentle Akrūra, I am depending on you to accomplish this important task, just as powerful Indra took shelter of Viṣṇu to achieve his goals.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

O peaceful Akrūra! He addresses him to give to encourage him. I take shelter of you since you are my friend and you are peaceful. “For what purpose do you take shelter of me?” I take shelter to accomplish an important task. “You are capable of doing everything yourself. Why do you need me?” That is true, but even if I am capable, the work will succeed with assistance. He gives an example. Though Indra was capable (*vibhuḥ*), he took shelter of Viṣṇu to achieve his goals. He indicates that Viṣṇu is inferior to Indra, since he hated Viṣṇu.

Text 36.30

gaccha nanda-vrajaṁ tatra sutāv ānakadundubheḥ
āsāte tāv ihānena rathenānaya mā ciram

Please go to Nanda’s village, where the two sons of Vāsudeva are living, and without delay bring them here on this chariot.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having encouraged Akrūra, Kaṁsa states the mission. They are in Vraja and have not fled elsewhere. Bring them in this chariot (*anena*), newly constructed and profusely ornamented. Kaṁsa gave his own chariot to show special favor to him. Seeing the new, beautiful chariot, the two children will happily mount it on their own without delay. Actually it was by

the will of the Lord that nice arrangements were made for Kṛṣṇa's welcome in Mathurā.

Text 36.31

nisṛṣṭaḥ kila me mṛtyur devair vaikuṇṭha-saṁśrayaiḥ
tāv ānaya samaṁ gopair nandādyaiḥ sābhyupāyanaiḥ

The devatās, who are under the protection of Viṣṇu, have sent these two boys as my death. Bring them here, and also have Nanda and the other cowherd men come with gifts of tribute.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He states the purpose in two verses (31-32). Of the two boys one will kill me. What can I do, since death (one of them) has been sent by the *devatās,* protected by Viṣṇu. Bring both of them, since the effort is the same. In order to make Akrūra go, Kaṁsa hides the fact that the two are actually non-different from Viṣṇu. Also bring Nanda and others. Kaṁsa feared that they would not come unprotected. His hidden, evil intention was also to cause problems for Nanda and the rest. They should also bring ghee and yogurt. In this way they would believe that the sacrifice for the bow would actually take place.

Text 36.32

ghātayiṣya ihānītau kāla-kalpena hastinā
yadi muktau tato mallair ghātaye vaidyutopamaiḥ

After you bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, I will have them killed by my elephant, which is as powerful as death itself. And if by chance they escape from him, I will have them killed by my wrestlers, who are as strong as lightning.

COMMENTARY: "What is the purpose of bringing them?" I will have them killed by my elephant, powerful as death. Death cannot be avoided for them. They will not escape, but if they do, then I will have my wrestlers kill them. The comparison with lightning indicates that their death could not be avoided.

Text 36.33

tayor nihatayos taptān vasudeva-purogamān
tad-bandhūn nihaniṣyāmi vṛṣṇi-bhoja-daśārhakān

When these two have been killed, I will kill Vasudeva and all their lamenting friends—the Vṛṣṇis, Bhojas and Daśārhas.

COMMENTARY: "You will get trouble from his friends." Kaṁsa responds in two verses (33-34). I will kill his friends such as Vasudeva. "Why do you not kill them before killing the two boys?" They will be in a state of lamentation after the two are killed. It will be easy to kill them. "They are your relatives." They are friends of the two boys. I will destroy them completely—along with their wealth (*ni-haniṣyāmi*).

Text 36.34

ugrasenaṁ ca pitaraṁ sthaviraṁ rājya-kāmukaṁ
tad-bhrātaraṁ devakaṁ ca ye cānye vidviṣo mama

I will also kill my old father, Ugrasena, who is greedy for my kingdom, and I will kill his brother Devaka and all my other enemies as well.

COMMENTARY: I will also kill my old father, greedy for the kingdom, and all others who side with them.

Text 36.35

tataś caiṣā mahī mitra bhavitrī naṣṭa-kaṇṭakā

Then, my friend, this earth will be free of thorns.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"But I am a Bhoja. Am I not their friends?" No, you are my friend. You are my benefactor. I will give part of my kingdom to you.

Text 36.36

jarāsandho mama gurur dvivido dayitaḥ sakhā
śambaro narako bāṇo mayy eva kṛta-sauhṛdāḥ
tair ahaṁ sura-pakṣīyān hatvā bhokṣye mahīṁ nṛpān

My teacher Jarāsandha and my dear friend Dvivida are firm well-wishers of mine, as are Śambara, Naraka and Bāṇa. I will use them all to kill off those kings who are allied with the devatās, and then I will rule the earth.

COMMENTARY: Dvivida is my dear friend. He is particularly mentioned because of his great courage. The kings he will kill are the Pāṇḍavas, and the kings of Matsya and Pāñcāla.

Text 36.37

etaj jñātvānaya kṣipraṁ rāma-kṛṣṇāv ihārbhakau
dhanur-makha-nirīkṣārthaṁ draṣṭuṁ yadu-pura-śriyam

Now that you understand my intentions, please go at once and bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to watch the bow sacrifice and see the wealth of the Yadus' capital.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Fooling them by the attractions, you can bring these two foolish children (*arbhakau*). The bow sacrifice and the splendor of the city will be attractive to boys coming from the forest. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

vācyaś ca nandagopo vai karam ādāya vārṣikam
śīghram āgaccha nagaraṁ gopaiḥ sarvaiḥ samanvitaḥ
kṛsṇa-saṅkarṣaṇau caiva vasudeva-sutāv ubhau
draṣṭum icchati vai kaṁsaḥ sabhṛtyaḥ sapurohitaḥ
etau yuddha-vidau raṅge kāla-nirmāna-yodhinau
dṛḍha-pratikṛtī caiva śṛṇomi vyāyatodyamau
asmākam api mallau dvau sajjau yuddha-kṛtotsavau
tābhyām saha nihyotsyete tau yuddha-kuśalāva ubhau
drāṣṭavyau ca mayāvaśyaṁ bālau tāv amaropamau
pita-svasuḥ sutau mukhyau vrajavāsau vane carau
vaktavyaṁ ca vraje tasmin samīpe vraja-vāsinām
raja dhanur makham nāma kāriṣyati vai sukhī
sannikṛṣte prajās tatra nivasantu yathā sukham
janasyāmantritasyārthe yathā syāt sarvam avyayam

payasaḥ sarpiṣaś caiva dadhno dadhyuttarasya ca
yathā kāma pradānāya bhojyādhiśrayanāya ca

You should speak to Nanda as follows. “Go quickly to Mathurā, bringing your yearly tax with all the cowherds. Kaṁsa, his servants and priests desire to see the sons of Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. I have heard that the two boys are expert at fighting. They are fighters who bring death in the arena, determined and most perseverant. Our two wrestlers are prepared for this festive combat. Your two boys, expert at fighting should compete with them.” I must see these two boys living in Vraja, who wander in the forest, the sons of my father’s sister, who are like *devatās*. You should tell the people of Vraja that the rejoicing king will perform a sacrifice for the bow. The citizens should stay nearby comfortably. For the invited guests there will be unlimited milk, ghee, yogurt, and buttermilk to be given freely and for cooking.

Text 36.38

śrī-akrūra uvāca
rājan manīṣitaṁ sadhryak tava svāvadya-mārjanam
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samaṁ kuryād daivaṁ hi phala-sādhanam

Śrī Akrūra said: O King, you have expertly devised a process to free yourself of misfortune. Still, one should be equal in success and failure, since it is certainly destiny that produces the results of one’s work.

COMMENTARY: I am satisfied with this result, after acting favorably to this wicked person for so long. Actually it is done for my benefit. Therefore I should act for his benefit.

In not saying it is beneficial, he will worry that I am indifferent. If, not trusting me, he does not send me, my long-held desire will not be fulfilled. I will thus speak some encouraging words to him. This he does with two verses (38-39).

O King, you should protect your body and your kingdom (*rājan*)! Or this act should follow *nīti-śāstra* for kings, not considerations of *karma*, etc. One should perform actions whether a success or a failure. One should not rejoice on success and one should not feel pain on failure. “Why?” Your fate produces the result. What will effort accomplish? *Samam* acts as an

adverb, or the word *bhāvam* should be added after *samam.* The meaning is the same.

Text 36.39

manorathān karoty uccair jano daiva-hatān api
yujyate harṣa-śokābhyāṁ tathāpy ājñāṁ karomi te

An ordinary person is determined to act on his desires even when fate prevents their fulfillment. Therefore he encounters both happiness and distress. Yet even though such is the case, I will execute your order.

COMMENTARY: He illustrates this. On attaining one's desires, one rejoices and on not attaining one's desires, one laments. Thus, nothing is certain since the force of karma is dominant. Therefore one should not be attached to the result. Fate overrides human effort. Thus *nīti-śāstra* is rejected. In his statement he places lamentation after rejoicing (*harṣa-śokābhyām*). This indicates that Kaṁsa will not attain his desire and will ultimately lament.

Thus, though it is not proper for me to act at this time, because I am under your control, I will follow your order. According to your order, I will go to Vraja, not by my choice. He hides his true feelings.

Text 36.40

śrī-śuka uvāca
evam ādiśya cākrūraṁ mantriṇaś ca viṣṛjya saḥ
praviveśa gṛhaṁ kaṁsas tathākrūraḥ svam ālayam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed Akrūra, King Kaṁsa dismissed his ministers and retired to his quarters, and Akrūra returned home.

COMMENTARY: The use of the word *ca* twice indicates that both parties were equally important. Equally instigating his ministers and Akrūra, being skillful at bad advice, he was inviting death.

Kaṁsa went to his house (*gṛham*) and (*tathā*) Akrūra went to his house.

Chapter Thirty-seven
The Killing of the Demons Keśī and Vyoma

Text 37.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
keśī tu kaṁsa-prahitaḥ khurair mahīṁ
mahā-hayo nirjarayan mano-javaḥ
saṭāvadhūtābhra-vimāna-saṅkulaṁ
kurvan nabho heṣita-bhīṣitākhilaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The demon Keśī, sent by Kaṁsa, appeared in Vraja as a great horse. Running with the speed of the mind, he tore up the earth with his hooves. The hairs of his mane scattered the clouds and the devatās' airplanes throughout the sky, and he terrified everyone present with his loud neighing.

COMMENTARY: The word *tu* indicates that Keśī is distinct from Ariṣṭa. He is described. By his nature he was extremely evil. Because of that, he was sent by Kaṁsa. Constantly he crushed the earth, and ran as swift as the mind. His name is explained: his mane scattered the clouds.

Text 37.2

taṁ trāsayantaṁ bhagavān sva-gokulaṁ
tad-dheṣitair vāla-vighūrṇitāmbudam
ātmānam ājau mṛgayantam agra-ṇīr
upāhvayat sa vyanadan mṛgendra-vat

When the Lord saw how the demon was frightening his village of Gokula, the Lord came forward to meet him, as he shook the clouds with his tail, searching for Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa stood before him, he called the horse with similar neighing, and Keśī replied, roaring like a lion.

COMMENTARY: The demon was causing terror in Kṛṣṇa's Vraja (*sva-gokulam*). *Gokulam* also means all the cows and cowherds. He came in the morning, when the cows were grazing in Vṛndāvana. This took place on the bank of the Yamunā, for later it is mentioned *bhagavān api govindaḥ*: the Lord, who tends the cows. (verse 25)

This event is described by Vaiśampāyana:

nṛśabdānusaraḥ kruddhaḥ sa kadācit dināgame
jagāma ghoṣa-saṁvāsam noditaḥ kāla-dharmaṇā
taṁ dṛṣṭvā dudruvur gopāḥ striyabhiś ca śiśubhiḥ saha

With the sound of a lion, angry Keśī, impelled by time, came to the cowherd village one morning. Seeing him, all the cowherds, along with the women and infants, fled. *Hari-vaṁśa*

This description is from another *kalpa.* Or later Keśī went to the bank and was killed there, for it is said in *Varāha Purāṇa*, *gaṅgā-śāta-guṇaṁ puṇyā yatra keśī nipātitaḥ*: there is a place hundred times purer than the Gaṅgā where Keśī was killed.

The word *sva* (his own) indicates that he must protect Gokula since he was Bhagavān, the manifester of unlimited powers. *Sva* can also mean his relatives, the cowherds, and *gokulam* can mean the cows. The demon terrified Gokula by his neighing. Or Kṛṣṇa called him by neighing. Keśī pursued Kṛṣṇa for battle (*ājau*). Kṛṣṇa thought of him as insignificant. Seeing the cowherds terrified, Kṛṣṇa came forward to pacify them. He went out of the village.

trāhitrāhiti govindaḥ śrutvā teṣāṁ tato vacaḥ
satoya-jalad-adhvāna-gaṁbhīram idam uktavān
alaṁ trāsena gopālāḥ keśinaḥ kiṁ bhayāturaiḥ
bhavidbhir gopajātī yair vīravīryaṁ vilopyate
kim anenālpa-sāreṇa haṣitāṭopa-kāriṇā
daiteya-bala-vāhyena valgatā duṣṭa-vājinā

Hearing the words of the people “Save us, save us!” Kṛṣṇa spoke in a voice deep as thunder clouds. “Do not fear, O cowherds! Why do you have fear of Keśī? Because of him, has your courage disappeared? What use is this wicked horse, which has no strength, is proud, and gallops around, taking strength from the demons?” *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Hari-vaṁśa says:

tam āpatantaṁ saṁprekṣya keśinaṁ haya-dānavam
praty ujjagāma govindas toya-daḥ śaśinaṁ yathā
keśinas tu tam abhyāśe dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇam avasthitam

manuṣya buddhayo gopāḥ kṛṣṇam ūcur hitauṣiṇaḥ
kṛṣṇa tāta na khalv eṣa sahasā te hayādhamaḥ
upasarpyo bhavān bālaḥ pāpaś caiṣa durāsadaḥ
eṣa kaṁsasya sahajaḥ prāṇas tāta bahiścaraḥ
uttamaś ca hayendrāṇāṁ dānavo 'pratimo yudhi
trāsanaḥ para-sainyānāṁ tura-gāṇāṁ mahā-balaḥ
avadhyaḥ sarva-sattvānāṁ prathamaḥ papa-karmaṇām

Seeing Keśī the horse demon, attack him, Kṛṣṇa attacked him, just as a cloud covers the moon. Seeing Keśī approach Kṛṣṇa and thinking of Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary person, the cowherds, thinking of his safety, said, "O Kṛṣṇa, do not approach that wicked horse. You are a child and he is unconquerable. He is Kaṁsa's original life air in an external form. He is the best of the king of horses, incomparable in fighting. He causes fear in all armies, is the strongest of horses, cannot be killed by any being and is the greatest sinner."

Keśī is compared to the moon in *Hari-vaṁśa* because he was white. He made a loud sound like a lion roaring. Or Kṛṣṇa, very strong (*bhagavān*), roared.

Text 37.3

sa taṁ niśāmyābhimukho makhena khaṁ
pibann ivābhyadravad aty-amarṣaṇaḥ
jaghāna padbhyām aravinda-locanaṁ
durāsadaś caṇḍa-javo duratyayaḥ

Seeing the Lord standing before him, Keśī ran toward him in extreme rage, his mouth gaping as if to swallow up the sky. Rushing with furious speed, the unconquerable and unapproachable horse demon tried to strike the lotus-eyed Lord with his two front legs.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Keśī tried to kill Kṛṣṇa who had lotus eyes. With eyes blossoming like lotuses, Kṛṣṇa glanced at the demon in disrespect. Or Śukadeva criticizes Keśī, since he did not change his evil nature on seeing the youthful beauty of Kṛṣṇa. The demon, looking at Kṛṣṇa, ran towards him. The horse was

difficult to grab (*durāsadaḥ*) since he moved quickly. Thus he was difficult to defeat.

Text 37.4

tad vañcayitvā tam adhokṣajo ruṣā
pragṛhya dorbhyāṁ parividhya pādayoḥ
sāvajñam utsṛjya dhanuḥ-śatāntare
yathoragaṁ tārkṣya-suto vyavasthitaḥ

But the Lord dodged Keśī's blow and then with his arms angrily seized the demon by the legs, whirled him around in the air and contemptuously threw him the distance of one hundred bow-lengths, just as Garuḍa might throw a snake, and remained in the same spot.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa avoided his blow (*tat*). Since he is beyond the knowledge of the senses (*adhokṣajaḥ*), how could Keśī strike him with his hooves? How foolish he was! Having avoided the blow, angry because the demon had spread fear in Vraja, Kṛṣṇa grabbed the demon's legs. Or, in a playful manner (*aruṣā*) he grabbed the demon's legs and then threw him at a great distance. Keśī fainted.

Text 37.5

sa labdha-saṁjñaḥ punar utthito ruṣā
vyādāya keśī tarasāpatad dharim
so 'py asya vaktre bhujam uttaraṁ smayan
praveśayām āsa yathoragaṁ bile

Upon regaining consciousness, Keśī angrily got up, opened his mouth wide and again rushed to attack Kṛṣṇa. But the Lord just smiled and thrust his left arm into the horse's mouth as easily as one would make a snake enter a hole in the ground.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The wicked demon (*saḥ*) got up. Or, though thrown at a distance, he (*saḥ*) got up. Just as a curious person will put a snake into a mouse hole without

fear of mishap, Kṛṣṇa put his fist in Keśī's mouth, which represented his life air.

Text 37.6

dantā nipetur bhagavad-bhuja-spṛśas
te keśinas taptam ayaḥ-spṛśo yathā
bāhuś ca tad-deha-gato mahātmano
yathāmayaḥ saṁvavṛdhe upekṣitaḥ

Keśī's teeth immediately fell out when they touched the Supreme Lord's arm, which to the demon felt as hot as molten iron. Within Keśī's body the Supreme Lord's arm then expanded greatly, like a diseased stomach swelling because of neglect.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His teeth completely fell out at their roots. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *daśanair mūla-nirmuktaiḥ*: his teeth came out by their roots. The teeth had touched the arm of Kṛṣṇa endowed with all powers (*bhagavat*). The arm did not change. Just by its touch, the teeth fell out, though the teeth were hard as thunderbolts and huge. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *sitābhrāvayavā iva*: the teeth were like thunderbolts. The possessive case is missing in the phrase *taptam ayaḥ sparśaḥ* (the touch of a hot iron). *Taptam* as a modifier is not combined with the compound. The teeth fell out as if touching hot iron. The *visarga* (*ḥ*)is optionally omitted in a compound thus the phrase is *aya-sparśaḥ* or *ayaḥ-sparśaḥ.* Both are permitted. The hand of the Lord with unlimited form (*mahātmanaḥ*) expanded. The arm expanded in his whole mouth. Though it happened quickly it was not astonishing. It expanded completely (*sam-vavṛdhe*), blocking the path of air. This was not seen by others since it happened within the horse's body. A partial analogy is given. It was like untreated indigestion. One sees suffering by such diseases. If the stomach suddenly expands within the body, it can cause a person's death.

Text 37.7

samedhamānena sa kṛṣṇa-bāhunā
niruddha-vāyuś caraṇāṁś ca vikṣipan

prasvinna-gātraḥ parivṛtta-locanaḥ
papāta laṇḍaṁ visṛjan kṣitau vyasuḥ

As Kṛṣṇa's expanding arm completely blocked Keśī's breathing, his legs kicked convulsively, his body became covered with sweat, and his eyes rolled around. The demon then passed stool and fell on the ground, dead.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

By Kṛṣṇa's arm which completely expanded (*sam-edhamānena*) Keśī's' breathing was blocked. He expanded his arm till Keśī's body burst. By that, the demon died. Nārada says in *Hari-vaṁśa*:

yat tvayā pāṭitaṁ dehaṁ bhujenānata-parvaṇā
eśo 'sya mṛtyur ahnāya vihito viśva-yoniṇā

When your arm extending to your knee made his body fall, he quickly died by the creator's will.

Text 37.8

tad-dehataḥ karkaṭikā-phalopamād
vyasor apākṛṣya bhujaṁ mahā-bhujaḥ
avismito 'yatna-hatārikaḥ suraiḥ
prasūna-varṣair varṣadbhir īḍitaḥ

The mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa withdrew his arm from Keśī's body, which now appeared like a long *karkaṭikā* fruit. Without the least display of pride at having so effortlessly killed his enemy, the Lord accepted the *devatās'* worship in the form of flowers which rained down many times.

COMMENTARY: The analogy with the *karkaṭikā* fruit is described in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa:*

dvipāde pṛṣṭha-pucchārdha śravaṇaikākṣi-nāsike
keśinas te dvidhā bhūte śakale dve virejatuḥ

Keśī's body was split into two parts each with two feet, half a back and tail, one ear, one eye and one nostril.

He withdrew his arm, since Keśī's back had been split open or by expanding the arm from within. His arm is called huge because it expanded within

Keśī's body or it was by nature huge. It is by nature unlimited. Though very small, the Lord is very large, and though large, is also very small. "Expansion" is from the external view. Though he easily killed the demon, he was not proud (*avismitaḥ*). Or though he killed the fierce demon, he continued to smile since he killed him without effort. *Anāyasta-tanuḥ svastho hasaṁs tatraiva saṁsthitaḥ*: Kṛṣṇa remained there without pain and smiled. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

Now, without fear, the *devatās* became joyful and showered many (*varṣaiḥ*) flowers. The *devatās,* who showered blessings on others, showered flowers. By killing Keśī, their giving blessings was fulfilled. Out of great joy, they gave many blessings to the cowherds. The word *sura* means "those who give glory (*suśobhanaṁ rānti*)."

Text 37.9

devarṣir upasaṅgamya bhāgavata-pravaro nṛpa
kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-karmāṇaṁ rahasy etad abhāṣata

My dear King, thereafter Kṛṣṇa was approached in a solitary place by the great sage among the *devatās,* Nārada Muni. That most exalted devotee spoke as follows to the Lord, who effortlessly performs his pastimes.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to Nārada, the sage of the *devatās*, the greatest devotee, the guru of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, who sets in motion the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

Devarṣi indicates that he was dedicated to acting for the *devatās.* He met with Kṛṣṇa intimately (*upa*) or he came in such a way that no one saw him. Since his conversation was secret, he spoke to Kṛṣṇa alone. He had no hatred for the Lord (*bhāgavata-pravaraḥ*). He was the best among devotees, the guru concerning *bhakti*, dedicated only to *bhakti*. Thus he was not a spy. He spoke in order to protect the devotees—*devatās* and Yādavas. His name is not mentioned out of respect.

O King! Śukadeva pacifies Parīkṣit, who had developed some hatred for Nārada. Just as kings like you strive to protect the citizens, Nārada strives to protect all the devotees.

"It is not proper for Kaṁsa with his wicked wrestlers to bring the Lord to Mathurā." Kṛṣṇa's actions are without suffering (*akliṣṭa-karmāṇam*), as in

killing Pūtanā. Or the actions are immediately done, such as killing Keśī. He will easily kill Kaṁsa. There is no need to worry at all. “Since he is absorbed in an ocean of *rasa* by playing in Gokula, one should not take him away.” He is Kṛṣṇa, the person who gives bliss to all. He must also give bliss to the Yādavas. Since he gives bliss to all, he performs pastimes eternally in Vraja also.

The friends went a little distant in order to show everyone the astonishing nature of his killing Keśī. Thus Nārada was alone with Kṛṣṇa. Or Kṛṣṇa, knowing that Nārada had arrived with an announcement that would give great pain to the people of Gokula, sent everyone off on some pretext. According to Parāśara and Vaiśampāyana, Nārada spoke invisibly from the sky.

nāradasya vacaḥ śrutvā deva-saṅgīta-yoninaḥ
gopāh kṛṣṇaṁ samānīya viviśur vrajam eva tu

Hearing the words of Nārada, the cause of divine music, the cowherds, taking Kṛṣṇa, entered Vraja.

This is from another *kalpa. Hari-vaṁśa* also says that after Kṛṣṇa killed Ariṣṭa, Kaṁsa spoke to the Yādavas to inciting them falsely, and also spoke to Vasudeva and Nanda. They then condemned Kaṁsa for his words. The Andhakas also spoke.

Text 37.10

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman yogeśa jagad-īśvara
vāsudevākhilāvāsa sātvatāṁ pravara prabho

[Nārada Muni said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, unlimited Lord, source of all *yogamāyā*, Lord of the universe, spread everywhere, the shelter of all beings, best of the Yadu *kṣatriyas* and cowherds, the master of time!

COMMENTARY: He repeats the name of Kṛṣṇa because the tongue is naturally attracted to chanting the name or he chants out of great devotion. Or the first utterance means Kṛṣṇa, the form of the Supreme Brahman and the second utterance means Kṛṣṇa, who manifests unlimited qualities of Bhagavān. This is illustrated by the other words. The power of the form of the Supreme Brahman is illustrated in three verses (10-12). The manifestation of Bhagavān’s qualities is expressed in nine verses (13-21).

Or because of great devotees like Vasudeva and Devakī being tied up and suffering, and thinking himself a great offender, fearing the effects of great offense, he calls out to the Lord to forgive him for his offense.

You should not say "I am the Supreme Brahman." Whose son are you? You should not say, "I am lord of the universe. All *jīvas* are my servants." What is your particular name? Though Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman with form, you are Kṛṣṇa, revealing unlimited qualities as Bhagavān. You depend on the *bhakti* of your parents and others, otherwise your revelation as Bhagavān is incomplete.

Everything may be explained in terms of *virodha alaṅkāra*. Though you are spread everywhere (*aprameyātma*), you are the son of Vasudeva *(vāsudeva*). Though you are *ātmārāma* (*yogeśa*), still you are the abode of full *śuddha-sattva* (*akhila-vāsa*), or you dwell in Devakī. O jewel in the womb of Devakī! He does not utter her name directly out of respect. Though you are the lord of the universe, you are the lord (*prabho*) of the best (*pravara*) of the Yādavas such as Ugrasena. Or O supreme (*pravara*)! "But this seems contradictory." That is true. Though things appear impossible, by your power it is all easily accomplished. O Lord, full of inconceivable powers (*prabho*)! This is your status as the Lord.

I have told Kaṁsa some facts because I know this will be an opportunity for your pastimes. By your mercy, I know the sequence of your pastimes and the truth about you. Nārada explains this in eleven verses (13-23). He explains the nature of Kṛṣṇa in three verses (10-12). In two verses (22-23) he addresses him.

He calls his name first to indicate that the form of Kṛṣṇa is the root. He repeats the name for emphasis. And since Kṛṣṇa is absorbed in his owns sweet pastimes, he wants to make him attentive. He then makes clear how Kṛṣṇa is the root by describing his inherent (*svarūpa*) characteristics. Because he is beyond all others and is infinite, he cannot be understood by anyone (*aprameyātman*). His form as Bhagavān surprises even himself.

Then his *tataṣṭha* characteristics are described. You control by your *yogamāyā śakti* (*yogeśa*), which is your complete form. Therefore you are the Lord of all the material and spiritual worlds (*jagad-īśvara*). In all these places, you are present because of your powers (*vāsudeva*). And thus you

are the shelter of everything (*akhilāvāsa*). To make clear that all this refers to Kṛṣṇa, he indicates his eternal position in pastimes with his devotees. You are the best among the devotees who are *kṣatriyas* and cowherds (*sātvatāṁ pravara*). The possessive case is used (*sātvatām*) to indicate that he is one of them. He is eternally present in pastimes with these devotees.

jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānāṁ vardhayan kāma-devam

Kṛṣṇa lives eternally among the cowherd men and the Yādavas, and is conclusively both the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty and the cowherd men, and with his mighty arms he kills everything inauspicious, in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā. By his presence he destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert, and the suffering of separation of the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvārakā. His blissful smiling face always increases the desires of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana and women of Mathurā and Dvārakā. He remains eternally in this situation. SB 10.90.48

The cause of his eternal presence is stated. O master (*prabho*)! You are the master of time and other factors. Thus, by these names Nārada indicates Kṛṣṇa's position as a form of unequalled powers famous by names like Śyāmasundara, as an associate of the Yadus and cowherds, and the performer of pastimes suitable to them.

Text 37.11

tvam ātmā sarva-bhūtānām eko jyotir ivaidhasām
gūḍho guhā-śayaḥ sākṣī mahā-puruṣa īśvaraḥ

You are the Paramātmā of all beings, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Karaṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, sitting unseen within the cave of the heart like the fire dormant within kindling wood, the witness.

COMMENTARY: The non-contradiction is explained through an example. You are the one *ātmā* of all beings, as in *dvau suparṇau:* two birds in a tree. You are one within all *jīvas*. You are many but one as Paramātmā, otherwise you could not be the Supreme Lord. This is clear in Vedānta. An

example is given. Fire appears differently according to different types of wood but no flame becomes visible without one original flame. Actually, one fire alone is situated in the various pieces of wood. Paramātmā is like that.

Though you are hidden from sight, you happily rest in a cave of Govardhana. Though you are the witness, without association, you are filled with great powers as the form with a thousand heads (*mahā-puruṣaḥ*). Or you are the supreme person, who gives himself, who is controlled by the devotee. Thus everything is possible. You are the Lord (*īśvaraḥ*). By this conclusion unlimited contradictions are easily resolved.

Text 37.12

ātmanātmāśrayaḥ pūrvaṁ māyayā sasṛje guṇān
tair idaṁ satya-saṅkalpaḥ sṛjasy atsy avasīśvaraḥ

You are your own shelter, and being the supreme controller, you fulfill your desires simply by your will. By your māyā-śakti you manifested in the beginning the three guṇas, and through their agency you create, maintain and then destroy this universe.

COMMENTARY: Even though by the *guṇas* you create, maintain and destroy all universes at the appropriate time, at this time you have appeared to protect the devotees particularly. This is explained in two verses (12-13).

Since you are independent, by yourself, you shelter yourself. You are devoid of any relationship with *māyā*. By your will alone, you create and destroy (*satya-sankalpaḥ*). For creation you create the *guṇas* by *māyā*. This is your amazing pastime. You create, maintain and then destroy.

Or all *jīvas* are naturally related to you as relatives (*ātmanātmāśrayaḥ*). (SB 10.74.21) Just by your will, you destroy the demons (*satya-sankalpaḥ*). The next verse explains that you appear in the world to destroy the demons. That pastime, though inconceivable, is possible because of your power: you are the supreme controller (*īśvaraḥ*). Maintenance or protection is mentioned last. This means that now, you protect by spreading *bhakti*, or that protection is your natural quality.

Text 37.13

sa tvaṁ bhūdhara-bhūtānāṁ daitya-pramatha-rakṣasām
avatīrṇo vināśāya sādhunāṁ rakṣaṇāya ca

You, that very same creator, have now descended on the earth to annihilate the Daitya, Pramatha and Rākṣasa demons, and also to protect the devotees.

COMMENTARY: He who creates this world of good and bad is you. You appear to destroy completely, giving liberation to demons and *pramathas* (a type of demon, followers of Śiva) in the form of kings like Śiśupāla. I have committed an offense by having your devotees, who should be protected, tied up.

Text 37.14

diṣṭyā te nihato daityo līlayāyaṁ hayākṛtiḥ
yasya heṣita-santrastās tyajanty animiṣā divam

The horse demon was so terrifying that his neighing frightened the *devatās* into leaving their heavenly kingdom. But by our good fortune you have enjoyed the sport of killing him.

COMMENTARY: You do not accept offenses and have given benefit to persons like me. You will do that in the future also. That is explained in eight verses (14-21). Just now the horse demon (*ayam*) was killed easily by you and was given liberation (*ni-hataḥ*). He will not return to give trouble. This produced good fortune (*diṣṭyā*). You also should kill others like Cāṇura.

Keśī's evil nature is shown. The *devatās* were in terror just because of his neighing, though they are free of the fear of time (*animiṣā*). Or fearing his coming, the *devatās* always glanced here and there with unblinking eyes (*animiṣā*). Thus you are called Keśava.

yasmāt tvayāiṣa duṣṭātmā hataḥ keśī janārdana
tasmāt keśava-nāmā tvaṁ loke geyo bhaviṣyasi

Because you killed the evil Keśī, O Janārdana, you will be called Keśava in the world. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

This is also mentioned in *Hari-vaṁśa.* Since it is clear and well known, it is not mentioned in the verse.

Texts 37.15–20

cāṇūraṁ muṣṭikaṁ caiva mallān anyāṁś ca hastinam
kaṁsaṁ ca nihataṁ drakṣye paraśvo ’hani te vibho
tasyānu śaṅkha-yavana-murāṇāṁ narakasya ca
pārijātāpaharaṇam indrasya ca parājayam
udvāhaṁ vīra-kanyānāṁ vīrya-śulkādi-lakṣaṇam
nṛgasya mokṣaṇaṁ pāpād dvārakāyāṁ jagat-pate
syamantakasya ca maṇer ādānaṁ saha bhāryayā
mṛta-putra-pradānaṁ ca brāhmaṇasya sva-dhāmataḥ
pauṇḍrakasya vadhaṁ paścāt kāśi-puryāś ca dīpanam
dantavakrasya nidhanaṁ caidyasya ca mahā-kratau
yāni cānyāni vīryāṇi dvārakām āvasan bhavān
kartā drakṣyāmy ahaṁ tāni geyāni kavibhir bhuvi

In just two days, O almighty Lord, I will see the deaths of Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika and other wrestlers, along with those of the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa and King Kaṁsa—all by your hand. Then I will see you kill Kālayavana, Mura, Naraka and the conch demon, and I will also see you steal the *pārijāta* flower and defeat Indra. I will then see you marry many daughters of heroic kings after paying for them with your valor. Then, O Lord of the universe, in Dvārakā you will deliver King Nṛga from a curse and take for yourself the Syamantaka jewel, together with another wife. You will bring back a *brāhmaṇa's* dead sons from the abode of Mahāviṣṇu, and thereafter you will kill Pauṇḍraka, burn down the city of Kāśī and annihilate Dantavakra and the King of Cedi during the great Rājasūya yajña. I shall see all these heroic pastimes, along with many others you will perform during your residence in Dvārakā. These pastimes are glorified on this earth in the songs of poets.

COMMENTARY: The word *ca* means *api* (even) and indicates that for certain all of the demons will be killed. I will see them all killed. This indicates his skill in revealing knowledge. Though only two other wrestlers, Śala and Toṣaka, were killed, the plural is used (*anyān*), since in killing the chief wrestlers all others were equivalent of being dead. Or because they were the best among the best, they are counted as all of them. “How can all of them be killed at once?” O Lord, you are capable of doing everything (*prabho*)! Or “Why must this be done so quickly?” O Lord, you are the lord

the Yadus! You must do this to help the devotees. The list of demons killed is not given in chronological order. They are listed only to ask for the Lord's assistance.

I will see others like Mura killed also. (verse 16) I will see you marry the daughters of *kṣatriyas* or the daughters of heroes among *kṣatriyas (vīra-kanyānām*). Or O hero (*vīra*) you will marry daughters because of your heroism. Thus, you pay a dowry of defeating and stealing away with a show of valor (*vīya-śukla*). *Ādi* indicates that some, such as the wives of Kāliya, simply offered themselves with *bhakti*. You will free Nṛga from his sin of unknowingly taking cows from a *brāhmaṇa*. Another version has *śapāt* (from a curse). However, the word curse is not used in describing the event later, concerning a sage. This happened near Dvārakā, where the lizard had fallen in the well and was saved by Kṛṣṇa, who came out of the city to rescue him. O lord of the universe! You show your powers such as riding on Garuḍa when Indra comes there. (verse 17)

Seeing the form of the Lord when he went to Mahākāla-pura, the *brāhmaṇa* attained liberation. This is described *in Bhāgavatāmṛta*. It will also be described in the text later. (verse 18)

Later, after the killing of Pauṇḍraka, Śiśupāla would be killed at Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice. (verse 19)

These astonishing activities will be suitable to sing or will be sung by Vyāsa and others. I will see activities like simultaneously your marrying many wives and giving mercy to Śrīdāmā.

govinda-bhuja-guptāyāṁ dvāravatyāṁ kurūdvaha
avātsīn nārado 'bhīkṣṇaṁ kṛṣṇopāsana-lālasaḥ

O best of the Kurus! Eager to engage in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni stayed constantly in Dvārakā, which was always protected by the arms of Govinda. SB 11.2.1

Ah (*aho*)! I am so fortunate to see this, and this is the greatness of your mercy.

Text 37.21

atha te kāla-rūpasya kṣapayiṣṇor amuṣya vai
akṣauhiṇīnāṁ nidhanaṁ drakṣyāmy arjuna-sāratheḥ

Subsequently I will see you destroy entire armies of soldiers when you appear as the universe, capable of destroying it, serving as Arjuna's chariot driver.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* means "after giving up fighting" or it indicates a different topic, different from previous pastimes. You will become the universal form (*kāla-rūpasya*). Though you are the form of the universe, you are capable of destroying it (*kṣapayiṣṇoḥ*). *Vai* means famous. Or *vai* means "even though". Though you are the form of the universe or time, and the inspiration for all actions, I will see you become the charioteer of Arjuna. This shows you are controlled by others. I have committed an offense by having Vasudeva and Devakī, who are worshipped by Arjuna, bound up.

Text 37.22

viśuddha-vijñāna-ghanaṁ sva-saṁsthayā
samāpta-sarvārtham amogha-vāñchitam
sva-tejasā nitya-nivṛtta-māyā-
guṇa-pravāhaṁ bhagavantam īmahi

Let me surrender to you, Bhagavān. You are the condensed form of pure knowledge and by you who are bliss itself you have forms with many qualities. Your desires are always fulfilled. Because of your *svarūpa-śakti* you are never touched by the material *guṇas.*

COMMENTARY: You are pure knowledge. What can be offered or communicated to you? Because you, not dependent on anything, show causeless mercy, you will do everything I have stated (*sva-saṁsthayā*). You never become tired from anything you do (*amogha*).

Or "Why do you ask that I destroy the fear of Kaṁsa for the devotees?" You destroy the fear of *saṁsāra*. By your powers (*sva-tejasā*) you destroy the influence of the *guṇas* of *māyā*.

Text 37.23

tvām īśvaraṁ svāśrayam ātma-māyayā
vinirmitāśeṣa-viśeṣa-kalpanam
krīḍārtham adyātta-manuṣya-vigrahaṁ
nato 'smi dhuryaṁ yadu-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām

I bow down to you, the supreme controller, dependent only on yourself. By your potency you have constructed the unlimited particular arrangements of this universe. Now you have appeared as the greatest hero among the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas and have manifested a human form.

COMMENTARY: You manifest a human form in all ways (*abhi* or *adya*). You are the leader (*dhuryam*) of the Yadus. The word Yadus also included the Bhojas and others, but the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas are the most prominent so they alone are mentioned. This is more particular than the other general statements of the Lord's powers. *Ātma-māyayā* means "by special *śakti* which is eternity, knowledge and bliss." *Krīḍārtham* (for play) should be added to all the statements in the verse.

Or though you are the form of pure knowledge, you have appeared for playing, to benefit the world by your great mercy. Displaying your unlimited powers, I praise you and offer respects.

Though you are lord of the universe, you are the shelter of the Yadus (*svāśrayam*). Though you ignore others, you perform pastimes of unlimited variety (*vinirmitāśeṣa-viśeṣa-kalpanam*). Thus you manifest a human form.

Or I offer respects to you. "How can you, a *brāhmaṇa,* worthy of my respect, offer respects to me, an inferior?" Your manifestation of power overrides normal behavior. You are the Supreme Lord, though you have a human form. Though you are the best of the Yadus, you live in Gokula (*svāśrayam*). To play you, manifest variegated pastimes.

Or I offer respects without fear (*abhi*). I am qualified to offer respects since my father respected you with devotion on seeing your powers. In Dvārakā, restricting his powers, the Lord worshipped Nārada.

Or you should forgive my offense. I surrender to you. He then recites this verse. I have done this to benefit the *devatās* and Yādavas. You know this, since you are the Lord. "This means that you have caused suffering for my parents." You can do everything just by being situated in Gokula (*sva-*

saṁsthayā). Or everything cannot be accomplished by staying in Gokula. You can destroy their suffering by going to Mathurā.

"My parents will suffer on seeing me being attacked by the wrestlers when I go." Without effort, by your desire, everything is achieved (*amogha*). "How can I forgive you for giving information to Kaṁsa so that he tied up my parents? Could you not avoid my going to Mathurā?" You can forgive because you have unlimited compassion. By your powers, you constantly manifest your quality of mercy (*sva-tejasā nitya-nivṛtta-māyā-guṇa-pravāham*). You are Bhagavān, who manifests unlimited qualities like mercy. Thus I surrender to you. The plural is used to include his disciples.

"Great offenses should be forgiven by the great devotees, rather than by approaching me." (verse 23 answers) You are full of all powers (*īśvaram*). Moreover, you are the shelter of your devotees (*svāśrayam*). Moreover, by your powers, you unlimitedly glorify your devotees. For play you manifest a human form and act as the chief of the Yadus. You appeared in the Yadu dynasty to benefit the world by manifesting unlimited qualities of Bhagavān. Therefore, you should also benefit me. You should forgive my offense or ask your parents. That is now your burden. Or as the chief of the Yadus, you should forgive. Then all others such as your father will forgive.

Text 37.24

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ yadu-patiṁ kṛṣṇaṁ bhāgavata-pravaro muniḥ
praṇipatyābhyanujñāto yayau tad-darśanotsavaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus addressed Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, Nārada bowed down. Then that great sage and most eminent devotee took his leave from the Lord and went away, feeling great joy at having directly seen him.

COMMENTARY: Since he was the lord of the Yadus, he must protect them. He was Kṛṣṇa, who is attracted affectionately to the devotees. Thus, Kṛṣṇa did not hate Nārada for informing him of the events. Nārada is again called the best of the devotees, so that Parīkṣit would not hate him. Or Nārada offered respects because Kṛṣṇa was Bhagavān. Though he was lord of the

Yadus, he was the joy of Gokula (*kṛṣṇam*). For these reasons Nārada offered respects.

He was joyful on seeing Kṛṣṇa. Even then, he departed. "Why?" He was sent off by Kṛṣṇa (*abhyanujñātaḥ*). Or he departed fearlessly (*abhi*), after offering respects, which made him fearless.

"Since Nārada was a great devotee why did he not pray to stay in Vraja?" He knew (*muniḥ*) that by living there at that time, he would commit an offense by obstructing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs* in Vraja. Or he understood that the people of Vraja would curse him after understanding that he had come there to advise Kṛṣṇa to go to Mathurā.

Text 37.25

bhagavān api govindo hatvā keśinam āhave
paśūn apālayat pālaiḥ prītair vraja-sukhāvahaḥ

After killing the demon Keśī in battle, though he was Bhagavān, as Govinda, he continued to tend the cows and other animals in the company of his joyful cowherd boyfriends. Thus he brought happiness to all the residents of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY: Though he was the Lord, he continued to herd the cows. Being affectionate to the devotees, how could he not keep Nārada, who desired the Lord, at that place? Though he was the Lord, he continued to herd the cows with the cowherds because he was the lord of Gokula (*govindaḥ*). Moreover, he brought happiness to Vraja continually. In order to accomplish pastimes with them, he could not keep Nārada there. Or he could not keep Nārada there since he worried about Nārada's offense to the people of Vraja, since he was affectionate to the devotees. Thus he is called Bhagavān and Govinda.

He killed Keśī in battle. This indicates his great strength. He herded the cows with the cowherds who were pleased (*prītaiḥ*) with his killing Keśī. They praised him with various verses.

tato gopyaś ca gopāś ca hate keśini vismitāḥ
tuṣṭuvuḥ puṇḍarīkākṣam anurāga-manoramam

When Keśī was killed, the cowherds and *gopīs* were astonished. They praised lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, attractive with *anurāga. Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

taṁ hataṁ keśinaṁ dṛṣṭvā gopā gopastriyaś ca tāḥ
babhūvur muditāḥ sarve hatavighnā hataklamāḥ
dāmodaraṁ ca śrīmantam yathāsthānaṁ yathā vayaḥ
abhyanandan priyair vākyaiḥ pūjayantaḥ punaḥ punaḥ

Seeing Keśī dead, the cowherds and their wives were overjoyed. They were free of all obstacles and fatigue. They welcomed beautiful Kṛṣṇa according to age and place, with pleasing words and worshipped him again and again. *Hari-vaṁśa*

According to these authors, Keśī was killed within Vraja. Though they praised Kṛṣṇa before Nārada came, they also praised him afterwards. Out of respect for the greatest guru Nārada, Śukadeva places his praises of the Lord first. Or because Nārada was coming, Kṛṣṇa sent the people here and there. Thus, they could not utter their praises at that time. Or since killing Keśī was not astonishing, they did not utter praises distinctly. Kṛṣṇa continued to give bliss to Vraja. He did not develop yet the desire to go to Mathurā, though the information had been given by Nārada.

Text 37.26

ekadā te paśūn pālāś' cārayanto 'dri-sānuṣu
cakrur nilāyana-krīḍāś cora-pālāpadeśataḥ

One day the cowherd boys, while grazing their animals on the mountain slopes, played the game of stealing and hiding, acting out the roles of rival thieves and herders.

COMMENTARY: Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that Nārada did not see the killing of Vyomāsura. Or after killing Keśī in the morning and hearing Nārada, Kṛṣṇa continued herding the cows and then killed Vyomāsura. The boys, who were pleased that Kṛṣṇa had killed Keśī, or Kṛṣṇa and all the boys (*te*), played a game of stealing objects and hiding them. This is described. They played the roles of thieves and herders. The two parties would herd other boys who played the role of sheep. The sheep are not mentioned since they were less active and thus not prominent in the game.

Text 37.27

tatrāsan katicic corāḥ pālāś ca katicin nṛpa
meṣāyitāś ca tatraike vijahrur akuto-bhayāḥ

In that game, O King, some acted as thieves, others as shepherds and others as sheep. They played their game happily, without fear of danger.

COMMENTARY: The method of the game is described. In that game or among the boys (*tatra*), some were thieves, some were shepherds and some were sheep. The sheep were taken easily without shouting. They played on the plateau because they were without fear, by the influence of the Lord. Or all fear had been extinguished after Kṛṣṇa had killed Keśī and other great demons in Vṛndāvana. This was also the cause of Vyoma entering among them. They could only become happy by playing without fear. Or there was no fear of time, since they did not worry about being separated from the Lord. O King! You understand, since when there is a king, the population is without fear.

Text 37.28

maya-putro mahā-māyo vyomo gopāla-veṣa-dhṛk
meṣāyitān apovāha prāyaś corāyito bahūn

A powerful magician named Vyoma, son of the demon Maya, appeared on the scene in the guise of a cowherd boy. Pretending to join the game as a thief, he proceeded to steal most of the cowherd boys who were acting as sheep.

COMMENTARY: Maya was famous among magician demons (*mahāmāyavin*). His son was Vyoma, and thus called Mahāmāya. Or because he had great powers (*mahāmāyaḥ*), he disguised himself as a cowherd. They did not recognize him as a demon. Or "Why did the Lord accept him in their playing?" He had accepted the dress of a cowherd. He should be merciful to him since he dressed as a cowherd. He stole most of the boys (*prāyaḥ bahūn*) and only four or five remained. Or the demon showed that his goal was *bhakti* (*pra ayaḥ*). Thus he was given some consideration, or because of that, the boys did not shout everywhere about him.

Text 37.29

giri-daryāṁ vinikṣipya nītaṁ nītaṁ mahāsuraḥ
śilayā pidadhe dvāraṁ catuḥ-pañcāvaśeṣitāḥ

Gradually the great demon abducted more and more of the cowherd boys and cast them into a mountain cave, which he sealed shut with a boulder. Finally only four or five boys acting as sheep remained in the game.

COMMENTARY: He threw them deep within a cave until only four or five, or fifty-four cowherds playing sheep remained. Or he put them in the cave gently. If they understood he was a demon, he would not be able to put them in the cave at all. He brought many in at the same time. He was capable because he was a powerful demon (*mahāsuraḥ*). He had powers of producing illusions. Four or five boys remained as sheep. The *sandhi* is poetic license. Or he sealed the four or five that remained playing sheep, in the cave. It would have been impossible to put all the unlimited cowherd boys quickly in the cave by himself.

Text 37.30

tasya tat karma vijñāya kṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇa-daḥ satām
gopān nayantaṁ jagrāha vṛkaṁ harir ivaujasā

Kṛṣṇa, who shelters all saintly devotees, understood perfectly well what Vyomāsura was doing. Just as a lion grabs a wolf, Kṛṣṇa forcefully seized the demon as he was taking away cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa understood the demon's wicked act. He was the shelter of the devotees. For this reason, he wore a cowherd's dress. Otherwise, he could not protect the best devotees, the cowherds. He seized the demon with force (*ojasā*). The demon resembled a wolf and was thus compared to a wolf in the example.

Text 37.31

sa nijaṁ rūpam āsthāya girīndra-sadṛśaṁ balī
icchan vimoktum ātmānaṁ nāśaknod grahaṇāturaḥ

The demon changed into his original form, as big and powerful as a great mountain. But try as he might to free himself, he could not do so, suffering from being held in the Lord's tight grip.

COMMENTARY: The demon was like a huge mountain and very hard. Though he was strong, he could not free himself because he was helpless in the Lord's grip.

Text 37.32

taṁ nigṛhyācyuto dorbhyāṁ pātayitvā mahī-tale
paśyatāṁ divi devānāṁ paśu-māram amārayat

Acyuta, clutching Vyomāsura between his arms, threw him to the ground. Then, while the *devatās* in the sky looked on, Kṛṣṇa killed him in the same way that one kills a sacrificial animal.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *devatās* looked on in joy. The locative case is meant instead of the genitive. They were in the sky, for even then they were hiding out of fear of the demon. He killed the demon like a sacrificial animal by blocking his breath (*paśu-māram amārayat*). Such a meaning is according to *upamāne karmaṇi.* (*Pāṇini* 3.4.45) This was very suitable. In that game for punishing the thief, they would imitate suffocating him for a moment, and the demon had also almost suffocated the cowherd boys in the cave. Kṛṣṇa did not stop performing such pastimes (*acyutaḥ*).

Text 37.33

guhā-pidhānaṁ nirbhidya gopān niḥsārya kṛcchrataḥ
stūyamānaḥ surair gopaiḥ praviveśa sva-gokulam

Kṛṣṇa then smashed the boulder blocking the cave's entrance and led the trapped cowherd boys to safety. Thereafter, as the *devatās* sang his glories, he returned to his cowherd village, Gokula, with the cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY: He took the boys from the place of suffering (*kṛcchrataḥ*), the cave. Praised by the *devatās* and the cowherds following him, he entered Gokula with great joy (*pra-viveśa*). Or he entered in a form surrounded by *gopīs*. Gokula is mentioned as Kṛṣṇa's own (*sva-gokulam*) because he did not intend to give up that place at that time.

Chapter Thirty-eight
Akrūra's Arrival in Vṛndāvana

Text 38.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
akrūro 'pi ca tāṁ rātriṁ madhu-puryāṁ mahā-matiḥ
uṣitvā ratham āsthāya prayayau nanda-gokulam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After passing the night in the city of Mathurā, the high-minded Akrūra mounted his chariot and set off for the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja.

COMMENTARY: Nārada, though the greatest devotee, had requested the Lord to go to Mathurā to kill Kaṁsa (*api*). Akrūra, though a great devotee (*ca*), departed for Vraja. Or *ca* can mean "but." This indicates that though the Lord did not want to go, he went because of the insistence of two great devotees. Akrūra departed after passing the night during which Kaṁsa had given his instructions. *Niśi stimita-mūkāyāṁ mathurāyāṁ janādhipa*: he spent the still, quiet night in Mathurā. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) Previously it was said that Kaṁsa had entered his house.

Mathurā was famous as the place where the great demon Madhu had lived. Or it was the city of the Yādavas, coming from the Madhu dynasty. Akrūra spent the night there. He expected to see Kṛṣṇa in Gokula, after he came from the forest in the afternoon. Or it was not possible to go into the forest at night since he did not know the path.

Hari-vaṁśa says:

tasminn eva muhūrte tu mathurāyāḥ sa niryayau
prītimān puṇḍarīkākṣaṁ draṣṭuṁ dānapatiḥ svayam

At that moment Akrūra (after getting instructions), with full affection, left Mathurā to see lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa.

This is from a different *kalpa.* Or Kaṁsa spent the whole night talking with the Yādavas, till morning arrived and then gave orders to Akrūra. Then Akrūra departed. Akrūra was highly intelligent since he desired to see the Lord. He situated himself on the chariot supplied by Kaṁsa. When the Lord

mounted the chariot, Akrūra would be the driver. He departed with the expectation of fulfilling his desires (*prayayau*), going to Vraja, the residence of all the cowherds (*nanda*). Or he went to Nanda's cowherds, to see Kṛṣṇa and separate Kṛṣṇa from them. Or Akrūra went to Gokula which gave Akrūra bliss (*nanda*). Though he was not cruel (*akrūraḥ*) and though he was intelligent (*mahā-matiḥ*), he intended to take Kṛṣṇa from Gokula. This expresses Śukadeva's lamentation.

Text 38.2

gacchan pathi mahā-bhāgo bhagavaty ambujekṣaṇe
bhaktiṁ parām upagata evam etad acintayat

As he traveled on the road, the great soul Akrūra felt intense devotion for the lotus-eyed Lord, and thus he began to consider as follows.

COMMENTARY: How did he travel? The description continues until verse 23. While travelling on the road, he thought as follows, because he was very fortunate (*mahābhāgaḥ*). He easily attained (*upagatah*) intense devotion to the Lord who displays his unlimited powers (*bhagavati*). He had natural *bhakti*, just as heat is natural to fire. He could attain the highest *bhakti* because the object was the most beautiful (*ambujekṣaṇe*). Or because he had great *bhakti*, which manifested at this time, he went now to Gokula.

Text 38.3

kiṁ mayācaritaṁ bhadraṁ kiṁ taptaṁ paramaṁ tapaḥ
kiṁ vāthāpy arhate dattaṁ yad drakṣyāmy adya keśavam

[Śrī Akrūra thought:] What pious deeds have I done, what severe austerities undergone, what worship performed or charity given so that today I will see Keśava?

COMMENTARY: His thoughts are revealed. This continues until verse 23. What pious acts like sacrifices did I do? What actions giving fearlessness to all beings did I perform (*taptam*)? What actions without pride or desire did I do, or what meditation on the Lord did I do (*paramam tapaḥ*)? *Paramam* can modify all the words.

"But without great mercy, this is not possible." Thinking in this way, he tried to think of an alternative (*kiṁ vā*). *Atha* can mean *athavā* (or) or it

can indicate auspiciousness. It must have been from charity (*dattam*)? Or it could not be charity either. The list of items is in order of increasing excellence. Because of this I will see the original person (*keśavam*) or he who killed Keśī, today.

Or what did I do? I am most fallen (*api*). I must have done something, otherwise I could not see the Lord today. Or I have done nothing. One cannot see the Lord by charity, etc. Why am I able to see the Lord today?

Text 38.4

mamaitad durlabhaṁ manya uttamaḥ-śloka-darśanam
viṣayātmano yathā brahma-kīrtanaṁ śūdra-janmanaḥ

Since I am a materialistic person absorbed simply in sense gratification, I think it is as difficult for me, absorbed in material consciousness, to have gotten this opportunity to see he whose fame destroys *saṁsāra* as it would be for one born a *śūdra* to be allowed to recite the Vedic mantras.

COMMENTARY: He elaborates: it is rare to see the Supreme Lord. Or after describing in general the Lord's greatness, he elaborates that greatness: he is glorified as the most attractive (*uttama-śloka*) or as the person who destroys *saṁsāra*. I consider seeing him most rare. "Why?" I am materialistic (*viṣayaṭmanaḥ*). An example of rareness is given. *Śūdras* are not qualified to recite the Vedas. The *śūdra* cannot do the activities prescribed for the *brāhmaṇa*. Their activities are distinct.

strī-śūdra-dvijabandhūnāṁ trayī na śruti-gocarā

The women, *śudras* and *dvija-bandhus* were not qualified to hear the Vedas. SB 1.4.25

By his nature the *śudra* is unqualified to recite or hear the Vedas.

Text 38.5

maivaṁ mamādhamasyāpi syād evācyuta-darśanam
hriyamāṇaḥ kāla-nadyā kvacit tarati kaścana

But enough of such thoughts! After all, even a fallen soul like me can have the chance to behold the infallible Supreme Lord, for one of the

conditioned souls being swept along in the river of time may sometimes reach the shore (the Lord).

COMMENTARY: He thinks he is devoid of *sādhana* for seeing the Lord, and completely unqualified (*adhamasya*). But the Lord never deviates (*acyuta*) from his glorious qualities like mercy in order to respond to a person's feeble worship. He will see the Lord because of the Lord's great qualities. The possibility of seeing is expressed by the potential verb form *syāt.*

An example is given. Some person without ability, controlled by others, at some time or at some pure place, can cross *saṁsāra*. Just as that is possible by the Lord's mercy, so my seeing him now is by his mercy. Since seeing him is possible, he thinks of offering respects, and by that considers himself successful.

Text 38.6

mamādyāmaṅgalaṁ naṣṭaṁ phalavāṁś caiva me bhavaḥ
yan namasye bhagavato yogi-dhyeyāṅghri-paṅkajam

Today all my sinful reactions have been eradicated and my birth has become worthwhile, since I will offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet, which mystic yogīs meditate upon.

COMMENTARY: My low status has been removed today by the Lord's great mercy. My bad karma (*amaṅgalam*) has been removed today. I will offer respects to the Lord whose lotus feet are the object of meditation for persons desiring liberation. I will directly offer respects to those feet. This displays the Lord's unlimited power. Though foot is in the singular, it implies both feet, since they are always together. Or the singular indicates his bowing down slightly. By that his whole inauspicious existence has been destroyed.

Text 38.7

kaṁso batādyākṛta me 'ty-anugrahaṁ
drakṣye 'ṅghri-padmaṁ prahito 'munā hareḥ
kṛtāvatārasya duratyayaṁ tamaḥ
pūrve 'taran yan-nakha-maṇḍala-tviṣā

Indeed, today Kaṁsa has shown me extreme mercy by sending me to see the lotus feet of he who takes away all inauspiciousness, of he who has now appeared in this world. Simply by the effulgence of his toenails, many souls in the past have transcended the insurmountable darkness of material existence and attained the Lord.

COMMENTARY: He describes the symptoms of the Lord's mercy. Sent by him, I will see the lotus feet of the Lord who takes away all inauspiciousness (*hareḥ*), and who has now appeared at this time for showing his nature as Bhagavān (*kṛtāvatārasya*). By just a slight appearance or ray from the disk of his toenail, by a little *bhakti*, some have previously crossed *saṁsāra*.

sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
vacāṁsi vaikuṇṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
śrutiṁ cakārācyuta-sat-kathodaye

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words in describing the glories of the Lord, his hands in cleansing the Lord's temple, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. SB 9.4.18

Ambarīṣa, with *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa, followed such persons. Since such persons cannot fix their minds on Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa has now come as an *avatāra*. Or he whose previous *avatāras* delivered people from darkness, has now come as the *avatarī* directly. I can see his lotus feet.

Tamaḥ can also refer to ignorance, the root of bad thoughts for persons desiring liberation. Previously devotees who were also sages surpassed the insurmountable root of bad desires by the effulgence of the Lord's toenails.

Text 38.8

yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ
go-cāraṇāyānucaraiś carad vane
yad gopikānāṁ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitam

Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and all the other *devatās,* by Lakṣmī and her associates and by sages in this world, as well as the followers of Pañcarātra. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the

forest while herding the cows with his companions, and those feet are smeared with the *kuṅkuma* from the *gopīs'* breasts.

COMMENTARY: He describes the lotus feet in order to show the success of his birth. Kṛṣṇa's feet are being worshipped by Brahmā and others. Or they were worshipped by them, but cannot be worshipped by them now in Vraja. *Ādibhiḥ* indicates Indra and others. The feet are worshiped by Mahā-lakṣmī, an *avatāra* of Lakṣmī, who is worshipped by Brahmā and others, who, by her merciful glance, bestows wealth to them. The feet are worshipped by *ātmārāmas (munibhiḥ)* who have no interest in Lakṣmī's wealth. The feet are worshipped by devotees. By their association and mercy, the *ātmārāmas* are able to worship the Lord's feet. Though his feet are worshipped by the cowherds, that is not constant and at every place. He herds the cows in Vṛndāvana (*vane*). Those feet are marked with the *kuṅkuma* from the *gopīs'* breasts. They also worship those feet. Another version has *ācitam* (endowed) instead of *aṅkitam.* The past tense is used to indicate that the feet are always smeared with their *kuṅkuma.* Or the cowherds do not worship his feet, being friends. He goes with them to the forest. Similarly, the *gopīs* do not worship his feet. His feet are marked with *kuṅkuma* from their breasts.

In the list starting with Brahmā those later in the list are superior (ending with the *gopīs*). Indra and others, being secondary are not mentioned directly. Or the mention of Brahmā indicates Kṛṣṇa's supremacy as a *devatā* and the Lord. Mention of Lakṣmī indicates his supreme wealth and good fortune. *Munis* (sages) indicates that he is the supreme human goal. *Sātvatas* (devotees) indicates his generosity in giving himself and that he is attained only by devotion. Herding cows indicate his great friendship and playfulness. The *gopīs* indicate his great beauty, cleverness and distribution of special *prema*. This is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Text 38.9

drakṣyāmi nūnaṁ su-kapola-nāsikaṁ
smitāvalokāruṇa-kañja-locanam
mukhaṁ mukundasya guḍālakāvṛtaṁ
pradakṣiṇaṁ me pracaranti vai mṛgāḥ

Surely I shall see the face of Kṛṣṇa whose smile is like jasmine buds, since the deer are now walking past me on my right. That face, framed by his curly hair, is beautified by his attractive cheeks and nose, his smiling glances and his reddish lotus eyes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having meditated on his lotus feet with natural *dāsya-rāsa*, he then desires to see Kṛṣṇa's lotus face because of greed from intense *prema*. *Nūnam* means certainly. He is called Mukunda because of his teeth, white like jasmine buds (*kunda*) when he slightly smiles. This name shows the special beauty of his face. The reason he is certain that he will see his face is because of the deer walking from left to right in front of him. *Vai* means "it is clear." Another version has *adaḥ* (there). Because of the sound of the chariot, the deer were far away. Because they were not a couple but many (*mṛgāḥ*) it may be concluded that black antelope were also there. In the scriptures concerning omens it is said that if two *gavayas* go from left to right in a pleasing manner, or if golden deer, not just two, go from, left to right, if they are all beautiful and do not move to the left, and if they are mixed with black antelope, then there can be no evil.

Text 38.10

apy adya viṣṇor manujatvam īyuṣo
bhārāvatārāya bhuvo nijecchayā
lāvaṇya-dhāmno bhavitopalambhanaṁ
mahyaṁ na na syāt phalam añjasā dṛśaḥ

I am going to see Kṛṣṇa, who spreads his powers everywhere, who is the reservoir of all beauty, and who by his own sweet has now assumed a humanlike form to relieve the earth of her burden. If I see him, will not my eyes be successful? No, certainly they will.

COMMENTARY: Again, out of intense greed, he has a desire to see all the limbs of Kṛṣṇa. I will see Kṛṣṇa who spreads everywhere (*viṣṇoḥ*), who accepts human activities in this world (*manujatam*) or who appears with human form though he enters everywhere as *antaryāmī* (*viṣṇoḥ*). He does this in order to deliver the earth from its burden of sinful demons. This

does not contradict his supreme independence. He does it by his own desire. Or he does it by the desire of his own (*nija*) devotees such as Brahmā, to give pleasure to his devotees. Because he is human, he is the abode of beauty.

Out of humility, he thinks it impossible to see the Lord (*na na syāt*). Later he says, "No, it will be possible, without effort *(añjasā*). Or I will see him excellently (*añjasā*)."

Api can indicate a question. Because of the deer circumambulating in the previous verse, it is possible to see him. *Api* can also mean "if." If I can see him, my eyes will be successful. Or if he comes close to me there will be success in knowing the greatness of *bhakti* (*dṛśaḥ*).

Text 38.11

ya īkṣitāhaṁ-rahito 'py asat-satoḥ
sva-tejasāpāsta-tamo-bhidā-bhramaḥ
sva-māyayātman racitais tad-īkṣayā
prāṇākṣa-dhībhiḥ sadaneṣv abhīyate

He who creates the world by his glance alone, inducing cause and effect, who is devoid of absorption in that action, who destroys ignorance, difference and illusion by his *cit-śakti*, can be perceived in the *gopīs'* houses and in the forest by those persons created by his *māyā* acting under his will, and endowed with action senses, knowledge senses and *antaḥkaraṇa.*

COMMENTARY: He creates by his glance, without *ahaṁkāra.* This distinguishes the Lord from the *jīvas*. He destroys ignorance by his *cit-śakti.* This distinguishes him from *jīvanmuktas. Jīvanmuktas* do not have *cit-śakti*. *Prāṇa* refers to the life force or to five gross elements and sense objects. *Akṣa* refers to the senses. *Dhi* refers to the *antaḥkaraṇa.* The Lord is perceived by the *jīvas* endowed with *prāṇas* (*prāṇa*)*,* senses (*akṣa*) and the *antaḥkaraṇa* (*dhībhiḥ*). Since the associates are not covered by *māyā*, they only appear to have attachments (as does the Lord). By his will (*tad-īkṣayā*), using *māyā*, which has no power on its own, he manifests these senses in these persons. This means that by his power, they act as if attached. On their own they cannot perceive the truth. They depend on

him alone. The appearance of being attached is actually not true. Their loss of knowledge is caused by the Lord.

Or "Why do you want to see me herding cows. It is filled with the identity of *ahaṅkāra*." You are devoid of *ahaṅkāra* since you are the cause of the universe of cause and effect. Devoid of the concept of 'I' and 'mine', destroying ignorance by your *cit-śakti,* you are realized by people in the house of Nanda and others who act as if attached. These people are accepted by you as your own, using their *prāṇas*, senses, minds. Without serving you, without perceiving you, the senses, and minds would be useless.

"Is perceiving him rare?" His rareness is described by three descriptive terms. Even in one's house he is perceived by the *jīvas* by searching for him (*īkṣayā*). What to speak of seeing him in Nanda's house? The cause is his mercy (*sva-māyayā*). In order to attain him, by his mercy he manifests them with *prāṇas*, senses and mind.

Or by his glance (*īkṣayā*) endowed with his mercy (*sva-māyayā*), he is attained without fear (*abhi īyate*), by those who are created, using their *prāṇas* and senses.

jāyamānaṁ hi puruṣaṁ paśyed yaṁ madhusūdanaḥ
sāttvikaḥ sa tu vijñeyo bhaven mokṣārtha-niścitaḥ

The person upon whom the Lord glances with mercy is understood to be spiritual and fixed in *bhakti*. *Mokṣa-dharma*

Or though the Lord is devoid of *ahaṅkāra*, and though he destroys ignorance, by his great power he glances (*īkṣitā)* upon the subtle and gross, or the low and the elevated souls. This shows his great mercy. The Lord is realized by these *jīvas* who are completely controlled by *māyā* when the *jīvas* engage their *prāṇas,* senses and mind. The activities of *prāṇa* are bodily actions. The activities of the senses are various services such as seeing the Lord. The activities of the mind are faith, etc.

Text 38.12

yasyākhilāmīva-habhiḥ su-maṅgalaiḥ
vāco vimiśrā guṇa-karma-janmabhiḥ
prāṇanti śumbhanti punanti vai jagat
yās tad-viraktāḥ śava-śobhanā matāḥ

Words that describe the Supreme Lord's qualities, activities and appearances, which destroy all sins and create all auspiciousness, animate, beautify and purify the world. On the other hand, words bereft of his glories are like the decorations on a corpse.

COMMENTARY: Words describing with his birth and activities destroy unlimited sins and desires (*amīvahabhiḥ*). Thus all suffering is destroyed. This also generates the greatest piety (*sumaṅgalaiḥ*). By this, the highest happiness is achieved. *Su* indicates that it is indestructible. Even if the talks are material or are mundane poetry, if mixed (*vimiśrā*) with some topics of the Lord, they have a good effect. What to speak off the topics of the Lord unmixed with other topics. The affix *vi* indicates the mixture is deficient or totally mixed. 'Activities' refers to killing Pūtanā, etc. Birth indicates that his appearance is included among the birth of the various *avatāras*. These topics give life to the world, since after birth, the forms of the Lord manifest. If living beings are devoid of auspicious qualities, they are almost dead. These topics thus give beauty to the world. There is no auspiciousness in the presence of bad *vāsanas* or the desire for liberation. These words purify the universe, destroying the bad *vāsanas.* There is no qualification necessary. The words affect the whole world. V*ai* indicates all or means well known. Topics like the story of Ajāmila are meant. Words completely devoid of the Lord are useless. If there is even a little inclusion of the Lord's topics it becomes auspicious. Another version has *viriktāḥ.*

Another meaning is this. What can be said? He shows such great mercy to the *jīvas*. Lifeless words, though pleasing, if somehow related to the Lord's birth and activities, become full of life

and most excellent. Those words bring the universe to life and make it devoid of *ahaṅkāra,* or make it glorious (*śumbhant*i). Those words even purify the universe. Corpses have no life, no auspiciousness or beauty and cannot purify anything. Words devoid of the Lord are worse than that. They are not auspicious, and, by inspiring sinful acts, they take away life.

This is what generally happens. The glory of the Lord's topics remains everywhere.

Text 38.13

sa cāvatīrṇaḥ kila sātvatānvaye
sva-setu-pālāmara-varya-śarma-kṛt
yaśo vitanvan vraja āsta īśvaro
gāyanti devā yad aśeṣa-maṅgalam

That same Supreme Lord, having descended into the dynasty of the Sātvatas to benefit the exalted *devatās* who maintain *bhagavat-dharma* and spread his fame, which the *devatās* glorify in song and which brings auspiciousness to all, is residing in Vraja.

COMMENTARY: Now, in Vraja, manifesting his nature as Bhagavān, he has appeared. *Ca* mean "but." He is shown more particularly than previously. But (*ca*) he has appeared in the Yadu dynasty. Or *ca* means "even though." Even though he is the creator, he has appeared now. *Kila* indicates it is well known in scriptures.

He benefits the *devatās* who protect his laws. If the *devatās* were to suffer, his own laws would not be true. Or he benefits Brahmā who institutes his laws. The Lord appeared in this world by Brahmā's request. It was said *vikhanasārthitaḥ*: Brahmā prayed that you come. (SB 10.31.4) By benefiting the creator of the world, all beings in the world get benefit.

Spreading his fame more than previously (*vitanvan*), because he displays unlimited qualities of Bhagavān, he lives in Vraja. This display cannot occur elsewhere. He displays his unlimited powers (*īśvaraḥ*). Or as *īśvara,* by his desire alone, staying in Vraja, he can relieve the earth of its burden by killing Kaṁsa and benefiting the *devatās*, in order to spread his fame. Or, though he is the lord of persons like me, he spreads his fame in Vraja alone.

The *devatās* sing about the Lord who has unlimited auspicious qualities, or from whom unlimited auspiciousness arises, or who is auspicious for the materialists, aspirants for liberation, the liberated and the devotees. He is auspicious for practitioners as well as for persons who are perfected. Thus, he should somehow come from Vraja. Or he will come to benefit the

devatās and Yadus, since he is glorified by the *devatās* and has unlimited auspiciousness because of his fame.

Text 38.14

taṁ tv adya nūnaṁ mahatāṁ gatiṁ guruṁ
trailokya-kāntaṁ dṛśiman-mahotsavam
rūpaṁ dadhānaṁ śriya īpsitāspadaṁ
drakṣye mamāsann uṣasaḥ su-darśanāḥ

Today I shall certainly see the Lord who is attainable by great devotees and gives instructions, who is joy to all people having eyes, who is the most beautiful in all the worlds, whom even Lakṣmī desires as her shelter. Now all the mornings of my life have become auspicious.

COMMENTARY: The greatness of his fame has been shown. I will today see that famous person. The word *tu* is an ornament, meaning *ca* with the indications previously explained. Or today I will see the teacher, who is the goal of Brahmā or the great devotees. He is the means of establishing what is to be proved. After describing in general, particulars are given. He is the most beautiful in the three worlds, etc*. Mahatām* also refers to Nanda others. I will see the Lord who displays (*dadhānam*) a form which is desired by Lakṣmī.

O I will see that form which makes the three worlds beautiful (*trailokya-kāntam*). By manifesting small parts of his beauty, there is beauty within the three worlds. Or he destroys (*antam*) the happiness (*ka*) of the three worlds. On seeing his form, one become detached from the happiness of this world. Not only is material happiness given up, but also the happiness of liberation. His beauty gives joy to those who see *ātmā* (*dṛśiman*). Now he gives happiness to the devotees. He is desired as the object of experience by the eyes, not just merely seeing him, even by Lakṣmī, who is worshipped by all devotees. After many nights, the dawns are now auspicious.

Text 38.15

athāvarūḍhaḥ sapadīśayo rathāt
pradhāna-puṁsoś caraṇaṁ sva-labdhaye

dhiyā dhṛtaṁ yogibhir apy ahaṁ dhruvaṁ
namasya ābhyāṁ ca sakhīn vanaukasaḥ

Then I will at once alight from my chariot and bow down to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Lords, which yogīs contemplate by intense practice in order to attain him. I will also offer my obeisances to the Lords' cowherd boyfriends and to all the other residents of Vṛndāvana.

COMMENTARY: He develops another desire, being dissatisfied with only seeing the Lord, which is natural for a devotee. "Foot" (*caraṇam*) is in the singular but means two feet. He will offer respects to the feet of both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma individually. Or he will grab a foot of each brother and offer respects to both simultaneously. I will offer respects (*namasye*). Present tense expresses the near future.

Not using the term "lotus feet" indicates that great desire has arisen in him. He now desires to offer respects to the Lord's feet only, without considering the Lord's qualities, etc. *Yogīs* hold those feet in their minds (*dhiyā*). The instrumental case indicates the locative case. Or the *yogīs* hold those feet by meditation (*dhiyā*), or with great attention, not thinking of anything else. Holding in their minds (*dhṛtam*) means contemplating with concentration. The *yogī* is a person in *samādhi*, or a devotee practicing *smaraṇa*. I will offer respects to the friends of the two (*ābhyām*) to attain those friends (*sva-labdhaye*). Or what to speak of offering respects to the friends of the two (*ābhyām*) I will offer respects to all the living beings of Vraja. This verse gives more details than the previous verses.

Text 38.16

apy aṅghri-mūle patitasya me vibhuḥ
śirasy adhāsyan nija-hasta-paṅkajam
dattābhayaṁ kāla-bhujāṅga-raṁhasā
prodvejitānāṁ śaraṇaiṣiṇāṁ ṇṛnām

And when I have fallen at his feet, my master will place his lotus hand upon my head-- a hand which destroys fear in all people who are greatly disturbed by the powerful serpent of time and who desire shelter.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because of the appearance of strong *bhakti,* Akrūra is not satisfied with just offering respects. He desires the touch of the Lord's hand. That is expressed in two verses (16-17). *Api* means "openly." When I fall at the base of his feet, my master (*vibhuḥ*) will place his own lotus hand on my head. That hand is described. Though I will be successful if one of his dear friends puts his hand on my head, will he not place his own hand on my head? Time is a snake because it destroys all beings and acts quickly to accomplish its task without being seen. That hand destroys fear in people who desire protection and are afflicted by the pursuit of the snake of time. The possessive case expresses the dative case (that hand gives fearlessness to all people).

Text 38.17

samarhaṇaṁ yatra nidhāya kauśikas
tathā baliś cāpa jagat-trayendratām
yad vā vihāre vraja-yoṣitāṁ śramaṁ
sparśena saugandhika-gandhy apānudat

By offering water to that lotus hand, Purandara and Bali earned the status of Indra, and during the pastimes of the *rāsa* dance, the Lord relieved the *gopīs'* fatigue instantly by the touch of his fragrant hand.

COMMENTARY: By offering items of worship to his hand, Bali attained the status of Indra. This refers to the statement *balir indro bhaviṣyati*: Bali will become Indra. (SB 8.13.12)

yatrāṁbu vinyasya balir manojñān avāpa bhogān vasudhā-tala-sthaḥ
tathāmaratvaṁ tridaśādhipatvaṁ manvantaraṁ pūrṇam apeta-śatrum

When Bali gave water to Kṛṣṇa's hand he attained all attractive enjoyment on earth. He became free of enemies, lived for a *manvantara* and attained the post of Indra. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Or by doing the *viśvajit* sacrifice previously, he attained a post like Indra. By offering the sacrifice to the Lord, offering water and other items are included.

The word *vā* indicates that what was described previously cannot compare to the excellence of his hand touching the *gopīs*. They were qualified with special *prema* (*vraja-yoṣitām*). *Vihāra* indicates his proclivity for play. He gives special *prema* to these *gopīs*. Wiping away their perspiration indicates his skill in love. By his touch, he removed all suffering. The fragrance of his hand indicates his supreme attractiveness. The fragrance of his hand is mentioned last to indicate that the *gopīs* alone directly experienced his fragrance. This is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Or Indra, by offering a hundred sacrifices to the Lord, attained lordship over the three worlds. Without offering them, he could not get the result. Bali attained the Lord as his gatekeeper. This shows he controlled the Lord. Or Viśvamitra (*kauśikaḥ*), by offering food and a weapon mantra to Rāma in his *āśrama*, attained a glorious position of realizing *ātmā* with some *bhakti*. Bali offered water on the pretext of giving three steps of land and attained rulership of the three worlds. Two personalities are indicated by the word *ca.*

Text 38.18

na mayy upaiṣyaty ari-buddhim acyutaḥ
kaṁsasya dūtaḥ prahito 'pi viśva-dṛk
yo 'ntar bahiś cetasa etad īhitaṁ
kṣetra-jña īkṣaty amalena cakṣuṣā

The infallible, omniscient Lord will not consider me an enemy, even though Kaṁsa has sent me here as his messenger. After all, he is the actual knower of the field of this material body, and with his perfect vision he witnesses, both externally and internally, all the endeavors of the conditioned soul's heart.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa has unfailing knowledge and powers (*acyutaḥ*). Thus he knows everything (*viśva-dṛk*).

Or Akrūra worries that he has no qualification to receive such mercy, since he serves Kaṁsa. To remove that worry he speaks this verse. As the witness, the Lord knows all my actions (*etad-īhitam*). Or he sees that all my actions arise from Kaṁsa, who knows his kingdom (*kṣetra-jñe*).

Text 38.19

apy aṅghri-mūle ’vahitaṁ kṛtāñjaliṁ
mām īkṣitā sa-smitam ārdrayā dṛśā
sapady apadhvasta-samasta-kilbiṣo
voḍhā mudaṁ vīta-viśaṅka ūrjitām

Thus he will cast his smiling, affectionate glance upon me as I remain fixed with joined palms, fallen with respect at his feet. Then all my contamination will at once be dispelled, and I will give up all fears and feel the most intense bliss.

COMMENTARY: All my sins (serving Kaṁsa) or desires for liberation, etc., will be destroyed (*apadhvasta-samasta-kilbiṣaḥ*). All my fears will be removed. Or thinking of receiving mercy, he surmises thus – the Lord will not only place his hand on my head, but will cast his smiling glance upon me. This is his further desire. While, being attentive, with folded hands, I remain at his feet, perhaps he will glance at me.

Text 38.20

suhṛttamaṁ jñātim ananya-daivataṁ
dorbhyāṁ bṛhadbhyāṁ parirapsyate ’tha mām
ātmā hi tīrthī-kriyate tadaiva me
bandhaś ca karmātmaka ucchvasity ataḥ

Recognizing me as an intimate friend and relative, Kṛṣṇa will deeply embrace me with his arms, instantly sanctifying my body and diminishing to nil all my material bondage, which is due to karma.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Again dissatisfied, Akrūra develops another desire. Using his arms, huge because of the deep embrace, he will embrace me as the greatest of friends since I have helped Vasudeva. My body (*ātmā*) will be made into a holy *tīrtha* by his embrace, though now I am impure. This is a statement of humility (*dainya*). The word *eva* indicates no dependence on others. The bondage of my *prārabdha-karma* will be destroyed. Or because my body will be capable of purifying others by his touch, my body will become a

tīrtha. Not only that, but if others see my body, their karmas will be destroyed.

Text 38.21

labdhvāṅga-saṅgam praṇatam kṛtāñjaliṁ
māṁ vakṣyate ʼkrūra tatety uruśravāḥ
tadā vayaṁ janma-bhṛto mahīyasā
naivādṛto yo dhig amuṣya janma tat

Having been embraced by the all-famous Kṛṣṇa, I will humbly stand before him with bowed head and joined palms, and he will address me, "My dear Akrūra." At that very moment my life's purpose will be fulfilled. Indeed, the life of anyone whom the Supreme Lord fails to recognize is simply pitiable.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Not satisfied he develops another desire. By getting contact with Kṛṣṇa's body, Akrūra in joy offers respects again. With my hands folded, he will say to me "My dear Akrūra." *Tata* is used instead of *tāta* because Kṛṣṇa will speak with the agitation of *prema*. He indicates the Lord's great mercy: the Lord has immense fame because of qualities like his unconditional mercy (*uruśravāḥ*). My birth will be successful. This indicates that this last desire is the greatest among all of them since by loving words of the Lord one can attain the highest bliss. The desires stated are increasingly greater in succession. He who is not addressed by the Lord has a useless birth. The word *eva* indicates that if the Lord at some time speaks to him, then his birth will become successful. The word *amuṣya* (that person) indicates an unseen person situated far from the Lord. It also shows he is greatly disrespected by the Lord. Not being spoken to by the Lord, his birth is useless. Or because he is so low and fallen, he cannot be mentioned. Or, he may be elevated by birth, but still he is useless. Śrīdhara Svāmī calls such a person a "creature." Being disrespected by the great Lord, he lacks all good qualities. Or, if he is not respected by a great servant of the Lord full of qualities like mercy (*mahīyasā*), his birth is useless, what to speak of his uselessness if he were disrespected by the Lord full of sweet qualities like mercy.

Text 38.22

na tasya kaścid dayitaḥ suhṛttamo
na cāpriyo dveṣya upekṣya eva vā
tathāpi bhaktān bhajate yathā tathā
sura-drumo yadvad upāśrito ’rtha-daḥ

The Supreme Lord does not consider a person dear or despised, the object of gratitude, the object of hatred or the object of indifference. All the same, he lovingly reciprocates with his devotees in whatever manner they worship him, just as the trees of heaven fulfill the desires of whoever approaches them.

COMMENTARY: The Lord does not give consideration to a person. He is indifferent. The word *vā* indicates a side glance. No one is dear since he is equal to all as lord of the universe. Even so, he favors the devotees. He fulfills their desires, but not the desires of others, just as the desire tree, served nicely, gives results. By giving to those who take shelter and not giving to those who do not take shelter, there is no discrepancy. There is no fault in the Lord for fulfilling the devotees' desires. He gives results for *bhakti*. Or the Lord responds properly (*yathā*) to the devotees, like the desire tree. Or the Lord responds to the devotee in the appropriate manner (*yathā tathā*).

Or in this world, by friendly service, someone does not become dear to one. Or by lending assistance or by birth, a person does not become the best friend. The dearest or best friendship which is permanent arises naturally. The Lord also does not become a friend or enemy just by a person's friendly or inimical acts. He becomes a friend or enemy to please the devotee and benefit everyone.

Without showing favorites, he must be indifferent. No, he is not indifferent. Being most merciful, he acts for the benefit of all *jīvas*. The word *na* is repeated to emphasis his lack of favoritism. He responds to persons who serve him in a friendly manner (*bhaktān*). He shows affection even to those who may not be dear, who have not shown acts of dearness previously.

The desire tree responds when one takes shelter of it and makes a request. Thus the Lord will fulfill my desires though I have taken shelter of Kaṁsa,

who should be considered an enemy and though I perform ordinary service only.

Or the double negative can indicate a positive. He has beloved and friends, though sometimes he is treated unaffectionately, sometimes is hated, and sometimes is ignored. Is he like the desire tree which gives to the person who simply approaches? No. He responds beyond the simple relationship. *Ye yathā mām prapadyante*: according to their surrender I respond. (BG 4.11)

Is that the meaning? No. How do I respond? As much as all men follow the path of *bhakti*, I respond. The more worship, the more results.

Or you do not have dear ones or friends. This expresses Akrūra's misery. Without gaining the Lord's affection, his life is unsuccessful. But you do not reject anyone. Everyone is dear to you (*na apriyaḥ*). You do not hate anyone. You are not indifferent to anyone. "Then how can Kaṁsa be killed? Will my desires not be fulfilled?" You respond to the devotees. By killing Kaṁsa you fulfill the desires of the devotees and not others.

Or do you not have great devotees (*dayitaḥ*) or close friends? Yes, you do. Great devotees in Vaikuṇṭha are Garuḍa and others, and in Gokula, Śrīdāmā, Rādhā and others. Great relatives are Kaśyapa or Nanda and others. He will not consider my worship, which is slight and filled with material desire. I am not dear to him (*apriyaḥ*), because of my association with Kaṁsa. Still he responds to the devotees, even if they have bad association. He is attracted to devotion. An example is given of attaining results by worship: the desire tree. Thus though I have a bad association, by my impure worship, he will be merciful to me.

Text 38.23

kiṁ cāgrajo māvanataṁ yadūttamaḥ
smayan pariṣvajya gṛhītam añjalau
gṛhaṁ praveśyāpta-samasta-satkṛtaṁ
samprakṣyate kaṁsa-kṛtaṁ sva-bandhuṣu

Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, the foremost of the Yadus, will grasp my joined hands while I am still standing with my head bowed, and after embracing me he will take me to his house. There he will honor me with all items of

welcome and inquire from me about how Kaṁsa has been treating his family members.

COMMENTARY: He expresses his desire for the mercy of Balarāma, who is clearly his relative, the son of Vasudeva, for he thinks of Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda. It would be impossible for him to get Kṛṣṇa's mercy, since he is most attached to the cowherds and *gopīs*. *Vā* (instead of *ca*) indicates that Kṛṣṇa's mercy is most difficult to obtain. Since Balarāma is elder (*agrajaḥ*), if he gives mercy, then Kṛṣṇa will follow his example as a younger brother. I will bow down with attention. Balarāma was famous as the son of Vasudeva (*yadūttamaḥ*). He will be smiling, because he is pleased in his mind. As an elder brother, he will welcome Akrūra to the house as a guest. He will ask what Kaṁsa has done to Vasudeva and other relatives since he is the best of the Yadus. Consulting with him, I will be able to bring Kṛṣṇa from there to Mathurā.

Text 38.24

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti sañcintayan kṛṣṇaṁ śvaphalka-tanayo 'dhvani
rathena gokulaṁ prāptaḥ sūryaś cāsta-giriṁ nṛpa

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, while the son of Śvaphalka, traveling on the road, thus meditated deeply on Kṛṣṇa, he reached Gokula as the sun came to Sunset Mountain.

COMMENTARY: Since Akrūra was the son of a sage (*śvaphalka tanayaḥ*), it was suitable that he thought in this way. Or his name is not mentioned because he was doing this job of taking Kṛṣṇa away. He rode in the chariot, or he went with the chariot, which was for Kṛṣṇa to ride. It would not be proper for him to enter Vraja riding the chariot. The sun was setting. *Athāstaṁ gacchati tadā manda-raśmau divākare*: the sun was setting and had gentle rays. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) *Kiñcit sūrye vijājati*: the sun was slightly shining. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa)*

Though going from Mathurā to the northwest for thirteen *krośas* one comes to the edge of Vraja, and to Nanda's house and Nandīśvara by noon, he arrived in the evening since that was auspicious. Or he went slowly

because he was absorbed in thinking, and did not hurry the horses. O King! Śukadeva comforts the lamenting king. Or he himself exclaims in sorrow.

Text 38.25

padāni tasyākhila-loka-pāla-
kirīṭa-juṣṭāmala-pāda-reṇoḥ
dadarśa goṣṭhe kṣiti-kautukāni
vilakṣitāny abja-yavāṅkuśādyaiḥ

In the cowherd pasture Akrūra saw the footprints of those feet whose pure dust the rulers of all the planets in the universe hold on their crowns. Those extraordinary footprints of the Lord, distinguished by such marks as the lotus, barleycorn and elephant goad, made the earth joyful.

COMMENTARY: He saw Kṛṣṇa's footprints in the pasture nearby, outside of Vraja. Soon Kṛṣṇa would leave the forest and enter the cow pastures of the village. He had a rare opportunity. He saw the beautiful or pure (*amala*) dust, devoid of even the desire for liberation, which the rulers hold on their crowns for that very reason. Rulers see him from far-off and offer respects with great devotion.

"Since he was seated on the chariot, how could he see Kṛṣṇa's foot prints in the evening, when Gokula was getting dark, since those footprints were mixed with the foot prints of many cowherds?" Those footprints made the earth joyful (*kṣiti-kautukam*). The earth kept those foot prints explicitly as her ornaments and they spontaneously manifested to the eyes of the devotees.

"How did he recognize them as the Lord's foot prints?" They were specially marked or appeared extraordinary (*vilakṣitāni*) with the lotus and goad. *Ādya* means the flag, thunderbolt and other symbols.

Or Brahmā, the protector of all the people, holds the foot dust to his crown, after having received Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

dṛṣṭvā tvareṇa nija-dhoraṇato 'vatīrya
pṛthvyāṁ vapuḥ kanaka-daṇḍam ivābhipātya
spṛṣṭvā catur-mukuṭa-koṭibhir aṅghri-yugmaṁ
natvā mud-aśru-sujalair akṛtābhiṣekam

After seeing this, Brahmā hastily got down from his swan carrier, fell down like a golden rod and touched the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with the tips of the four crowns on his heads. Offering his obeisances, he bathed the feet of Kṛṣṇa with his tears of joy. SB 10.13.62

Or he saw the pure dust that Brahmā, Śiva and others hold on their crowns. Somehow, they obtain it and worship it. It is most rare. He directly saw the footprints made of that dust. He was more fortunate than the *devatās.*

Text 38.26

tad-darśanāhlāda-vivṛddha-sambhramaḥ
premṇordhva-romāśru-kalākulekṣaṇaḥ
rathād avaskandya sa teṣv aceṣṭata
prabhor amūny aṅghri-rajāṁsy aho iti

Increasingly agitated by ecstasy at seeing the Lord's footprints, his bodily hairs standing on end because of his pure love, and his eyes filled with tears, Akrūra jumped down from his chariot and began rolling about among those footprints, exclaiming, "Ah, this is the dust from my master's feet!"

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was in a state of agitation (*sambhramaḥ*) in which he could not carry out the necessary inquiry. Thus he rolled among the foot prints. The phrase "out of *prema*" should be repeated for all the phrases. Because of *prema* he was agitated with joy, because of *prema* his eyes filled with tears and because of *prema* he rolled in the foot prints. The word *aho* expresses the rareness of seeing those foot prints. The word *iti* indicates that the whole last line was what Akrūra said.

Text 38.27

dehaṁ-bhṛtām iyān artho hitvā dambhaṁ bhiyaṁ śucam
sandeśād yo harer liṅga-darśana-śravaṇādibhiḥ

The very goal of life for all embodied beings is this ecstasy, which Akrūra experienced when, upon receiving Kaṁsa's order, he put aside all pride,

fear and lamentation and absorbed himself in seeing, hearing, and describing the things that reminded him of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: In relating how Akrūra rolled in the foot dust, Śukadeva praises Akrūra because of his intense *bhakti.* This is the goal for those having bodies. Otherwise the body is useless. "He put aside all pride, fear and lamentation." This is a general description. In *prema*, such qualities are not actually present. *Dambha* means falsity. Lamentation is caused by separation from things one treasures. One experiences fear because of wicked people. If these are present, he could not roll on the ground. Thus it says that he gave these up. Or it is meant as an instruction. Giving up is recommended because of the wealth of *prema*.

Hareḥ means "of he who attracts the mind." He absorbed himself in hearing, seeing the indications of the Lord (*liṅga*). Remembering and chanting are also included and also serving as a messenger (*sandeśāt*).

Or the goal of the living entities is rolling on the earth in *prema* (*iyān*). What was his verbal service? It is chanting such as verse 26. *Liṅga* can also mean the deity form. Chanting however is the main process since he was filled with *prema*. Later, he mounted the chariot to bring it into Gokula. In verse 34 it is described that he then got off the chariot.

Texts 38.28–33

dadarśa kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca vraje go-dohanaṁ gatau
pīta-nīlāmbara-dharau śarad-amburahekṣaṇau
kiśorau śyāmala-śvetau śrī-niketau bṛhad-bhujau
su-mukhau sundara-varau bala-dvirada-vikramau
dhvaja-vajrāṅkuśāmbhojaiś cihnitair aṅghribhir vrajam
śobhayantau mahātmānau sānukrośa-smitekṣaṇau
udāra-rucira-krīḍau sragviṇau vana-mālinau
puṇya-gandhānuliptāṅgau snātau viraja-vāsasau
pradhāna-puruṣāv ādyau jagad-dhetū jagat-patī
avatīrṇau jagaty-arthe svāṁśena bala-keśavau
diśo vitimirā rājan kurvāṇau prabhayā svayā
yathā mārakataḥ śailo raupyaś ca kanakācitau

Akrūra then saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the village of Vraja, going to milk the cows. Kṛṣṇa wore yellow garments, Balarāma blue, and their eyes resembled autumnal lotuses. One of those two mighty-armed youths, the shelters of the goddess of fortune, had a dark-blue complexion, and the other's was white. With their fine-featured faces they were the most beautiful of all persons. As they walked with the gait of young elephants, glancing about with compassionate smiles, those two exalted personalities beautified the cow pasture with the impressions of their feet, which bore the marks of the flag, lightning bolt, elephant goad and lotus. The two Lords, whose pastimes are most magnanimous and attractive, were ornamented with short and long flower garlands, anointed with auspicious, fragrant substances. They were freshly bathed and dressed in spotless cloth. They were the primeval Lords, the masters and original causes of the universes, Keśava and Balarāma who had for the welfare of the earth now descended with their expansions. O King Parīkṣit, they resembled two gold-bedecked mountains, one of emerald and the other of silver. With their effulgence they dispelled the sky's darkness in all directions.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first, since he had a special devotion to him or because of Kṛṣṇa special powers, he noticed him first. The two boys were going to milk the cows in the place where the cows lived, in Vraja. He saw them among the cows.

sa dadarśa tadā tatra kṛṣṇam ādohane gavām
vatsa-madhyāgataṁ phullanīlotpala-dala-cchavim

Akrūra saw Kṛṣṇa with the complexion of a blossoming blue lotus amidst the calves at the place for milking the cows. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

praviśann eva ca dvāri dadarśādohane gavām
vatsa-madhye sthitaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ savatsam iva govṛṣam

Entering the gate, Akrūra saw Kṛṣṇa amongst the calves, like a bull with calves, at the place for milking the cows. *Hari-vaṁśa*

He mixed with the calves, like cowherds milking cows mixing with the calves. The two boys are then described in five and a half verses. After seeing, details are described as he got closer. He saw Kṛṣṇa's yellow cloth. This is representative of other things he saw, such as ornaments. Those are

described later in verse 33. Their eyes were like autumn rain clouds. This represents other aspects of his beauty also. They were of *kaiśora* age, with black and white complexions. They were the abodes of various types of glory such as beauty. They had huge arms, showing their heroic stature. They had beautiful faces, showing their attractiveness.

Or they had the abodes of Lakṣmī on their chests. They had the best arms and faces. Other features were also beautiful (s*undarau*). Like young elephants (being of *kaiśora* age) they were valorous. Their valorous carriage indicates they were also proud. *Vikrama* also indicates their gait. They moved like young elephants.

They made Vraja beautiful by the marks made by their feet. Or they made Vraja beautiful by their four feet making marks. Plural of "feet" means four feet. They wandered about here and there at will, making marks everywhere. Another version has *maṇḍayantau*. Since they were going to milk the cows, they made marks.

tuṅga-rakta-nakhaṁ padbhyāṁ dharaṇyāṁ supratiṣṭitam

There were clear marks on the earth made by their feet. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

bhuvi padbhyāṁ vyavasthitaḥ

There were marks made by his feet on the ground. *Hari-vaṁśa*

They were endowed with all qualities (*mahātmānau*). Their main quality was mercy (*anukrośa*). This also indicates their sweetness.

They played (milking the cows, playing the flute, etc.) attractively, bestowing all desires, or in an extraordinary way (*udāra*). They were decorated with jewel garlands or with flower garlands on their heads (*sragvinau*) or with garlands reaching their feet. Their limbs were smeared with sandalwood mixed with *kuṅkuma*, drawn in patterns, in various colors like yellow and blue. They had been bathed by their mothers to remove the cow dust. They wore dust-free cloth (*viraja-vāsasau*). The ending on *viraja* is like the usage in *arthāḥ pāda-rajopamāḥ*.

Their greatness is described. They appeared as one Bhagavān in two forms (*svāṁsena*). Thus the dual ending is used in all these verses. They were both lords of the universe (*jagat-patī*). They could thus remove the burden of the earth. Their names were Balarāma and Keśava. *Balādhikyād balaṁ*

viduḥ: he will be known as *bala* because of his great strength. (SB 10.8.12) *Keśava* means he who killed Keśī. Balarāma is mentioned first because he took birth first. They appeared in order to spread *prema* in the universe (*jagaty arthe*). They appeared together with portions of their associates (*svāṁśena*). *Aṁśas* can mean Śrīdāmā and others. The dual ending is used to show that they are both *avatāras* as explained in First Canto, Third Chapter.

How could he see all these details from his chariot situated far away? They revealed everything through their natural effulgence. They were most effulgent. O King! Śukadeva calls out in astonishment at Akrūra's good fortune. Or *rājan* can be connected to the second line. They shone (*rājan*) like emerald and silver mountains decorated with gold. The example is incomplete without an element of similarity (shining). The mountains are in the singular, but *kanakācitau* (decorated with gold) is in the dual case to complete the analogy. They are compared to mountains because they were huge in size. *Parvata-pravarākṛtiḥ*: he had a form like the best mountain. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) *prāṁśum uttūṅgabāhvaṁsam*: he was tall, with thick arms and shoulders. By their nature, they could thus defeat all others. Or they could not be surpassed, like mountains.

Or they only appeared like this in order to kill Kaṁśa. Otherwise the women of Mathurā could not say that their limbs were soft. (SB 10.44.8) One should not say that the two appeared soft to the women of Mathurā because of their intense affection, for one does not find that they were actually huge in form anywhere else. This would also act as an obstacle to playing in Vraja.

Text 38.34

rathāt tūrṇam avaplutya so 'krūraḥ sneha-vihvalaḥ
papāta caraṇopānte daṇḍa-vad rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

Akrūra, overwhelmed with affection, quickly jumped down from his chariot and fell at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma like a rod.

COMMENTARY: He who for a long time desired to see the two boys in Gokula or he who had developed many desires (*saḥ*) fell on the ground somewhat near their feet, without consideration of rules, because he was

confused by *prema*. Balarāma is mentioned first because Balarāma as the eldest was situated in front when they came forward to meet Akrūra.

Text 38.35

bhagavad-darśanāhlāda-bāṣpa-paryākulekṣaṇaḥ
pulakācitāṅga autkaṇṭhyāt svākhyāne nāśakan nṛpa

The joy of seeing the Supreme Lord flooded Akrūra's eyes with tears and decorated his limbs with eruptions of ecstasy. He felt such eagerness that he could not speak to present himself, O King.

COMMENTARY: The cause of only offering respects on the ground because of intense *prema* is described. This indicates the extent of his *prema*. He had profuse tears in his eyes so that he could not see. His hairs stood on end profusely because of the lack of control produced by prema. He could not speak, what to speak of offering respects properly. *Hi* means certainly. O King! This expresses Akrūra's good fortune or he comforts Parīkṣit who is overcome with *prema* on hearing of Akrūra's great *prema*.

Text 38.36

bhagavāṁs tam abhipretya rathāṅgāṅkita-pāṇinā
parirebhe 'bhyupākṛṣya prītaḥ praṇata-vatsalaḥ

Recognizing Akrūra, Kṛṣṇa drew him close with his hand, which bears the sign of the chariot wheel, and then embraced him. Kṛṣṇa felt pleased, for he is affectionate toward his surrendered devotees.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was omniscient and full of mercy (*bhagavān*). His hand marked with the wheel indicates Kṛṣṇa's great ability.

so 'pyenaṁ dhvaja-vajrābja-kṛta-cihnena pāṇinā
saṁspṛśyākṛṣya ca prītya sugāḍhaṁ pariṣasvaje

Kṛṣṇa touched Akrūra with his hand marked with the flag, thunderbolt and lotus, pulled him towards him and deeply embraced him with affection. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Being pleased, Kṛṣṇa embraced him, because he was pleased with his surrender (*praṇata-vatsalaḥ*), not with his motive in coming to Vraja. This

was the reason he embraced him, though Akrūra had fallen on the ground. Or knowing Akrūra's desires, he was pleased and thus embraced him.

Texts 38.37–38

saṅkarṣaṇaś ca praṇatam upaguhya mahā-manāḥ
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī anayat sānujo gṛham
pṛṣṭvātha sv-āgataṁ tasmai nivedya ca varāsanam
prakṣālya vidhi-vat pādau madhu-parkārhaṇam āharat

As Akrūra stood with his head bowed, Balarāma grasped his joined hands, and then Balarāma took him to Nanda's house in the company of Kṛṣṇa. After inquiring from Akrūra whether his trip had been comfortable, Balarāma offered him a first-class seat, bathed his feet in accordance with the injunctions of scripture and respectfully served him *madhuparka*.

COMMENTARY: The name Saṅkarṣaṇa identifies Balarāma as a Yadu, though he was living as a cowherd. *Yadūnām apṛthag bhāvāt*: he was non-different from the Yadus. (SB 10.8.12) Or the name indicates that he attracted everyone, like Kṛṣṇa. Akrūra had previously offered respects to Kṛṣṇa. Or he again offered respects separately to Balarāma. Balarāma is called generous (*mahāmanā*) because he received Akrūra properly as a guest.

Or Kṛṣṇa had become helpless out of affection for his devotee and Nanda and others were within the house, as if filled with grief (at the impeding separation). Balarāma then thought, "Today there is no one except me to welcome him." Or he welcomed Akrūra in order to hide the fact that Akrūra would cause great suffering Vraja by taking Kṛṣṇa away. Kṛṣṇa was in a secondary position (*sānujaḥ*) or could not lead Akrūra to the house because of his *prema*. Balarāma led him to Nanda's house—where Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were also staying.

After bringing Akrūra to the house, Balarāma offered him an excellent seat made of gems. He washed his feet and offered *madhuparka* according to the rules. The phrase "according to the rules" should be added to all the items he offered. The rules are well known in the *smṛtis*.

Text 38.39

nivedya gāṁ cātithaye saṁvāhya śrāntam āḍṛtaḥ
annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁ medhyaṁ śraddhayopāharad vibhuḥ

The almighty Balarāma, in devotion, presented Akrūra with the gift of a cow, massaged his feet to relieve him of fatigue and then with great respect and faith fed him suitably prepared food of various fine tastes.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma massaged Akrūra's feet. "Why did Akrūra allow this?" Balarāma was devoted. He acted hospitably (*ātithye*). Akrūra tolerated because of Balarāma's affection. He offered him pure (*medhyam*) tasty food. This was mainly milk products. Balarāma sat close to him, and personally served him (*upāharat*), asking him to eat more, serving him eagerly with sweet words (*śraddhayā*). Balarāma was competent to do all of this (*vibhuḥ*). He did everything perfectly.

Text 38.40

tasmai bhuktavate prītyā rāmaḥ parama-dharma-vit
makha-vāsair gandha-mālyaiḥ parāṁ prītiṁ vyadhāt punaḥ

When Akrūra had eaten to his satisfaction, Balarāma, the knower of devotion, offered him aromatic herbs for sweetening his mouth, along with fragrances and flower garlands for his great satisfaction.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The dative case is used instead of the possessive case in *tasmai bhuktavate* (when he had eaten). Balarāma was the knower of *vaiṣṇava-dharma,* how to treat devotees. He knew how to welcome the devotees. It was the Dvādaśī, time for breaking the fast, and especially Vaiṣṇavas should be properly respected at that time. Balarāma acted to teach the common people. He made Akrūra pleased. That day was Dvādaśī and in two days it would be Caturdaśī, the day for worshipping Śiva and the day that Kaṁsa would die. Out of eagerness to see the Lord, Akrūra had not broken the Ekādaśī fast. According to the rule one cannot break the fast in the evening. This rule was overlooked because he took his meal directly in the house of the Lord.

Text 38.41

papraccha sat-kṛtaṁ nandaḥ kathaṁ stha niranugrahe
kaṁse jīvati dāśārha sauna-pālā ivāvayaḥ

Nanda Mahārāja asked Akrūra, who had been welcomed by Balarāma: O descendant of Daśārha, how are all of you maintaining yourselves while that merciless Kaṁsa remains alive? You are just like sheep under the care of a butcher.

COMMENTARY: After Akrūra had been welcomed by Balarāma, Nanda inquired from him. O descendant of Daśārha! By this, Nanda hints that Akrūra must be fearful, since Kaṁsa had hatred for the Yadu dynasty. *Śauna* means a killer of animals, derived from *śunā* (killing). As long as he lives, the sheep will be inevitably killed. Similarly, as long as Kaṁsa lives, your lives will not be safe. The example indicates that because the Yadus are not strong, Kaṁsa can easily kill them. Kaṁsa is without mercy. He is crueler than the killer of animals, since he will kill the Yadus. Therefore he should be killed.

Text 38.42

yo 'vadhīt sva-svasus tokān krośantyā asu-tṛp khalaḥ
kiṁ nu svit tat-prajānāṁ vaḥ kuśalaṁ vimṛśāmahe

That cruel, self-serving Kaṁsa murdered the infants of his own sister in her presence, even as she cried in anguish. Can we imagine how much well-being those dependent on him have?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Nanda calls Devakī Kaṁsa's sister, because of their close relationship.[1] It was not proper to kill the sons of one's sister. And they were also small children, just born. And she cried in grief as he did this. This shows Kaṁsa's great cruelty and Devakī's great sorrow. And this was only so that Kaṁsa could protect his own body (*asu-tṛp*). And these children were innocent. Since Kaṁsa made false accusations he was a crafty person. How much well-being do persons who are dependent on him (*prajānām*) have? *Nu* indicates calling attention. *Svit* indicates conjecture. *Kim kuśalam* means "how much well-being."

Text 38.43

itthaṁ sūnṛtayā vācā nandena su-sabhājitaḥ
akrūraḥ paripṛṣṭena jahāv adhva-pariśramam

Honored by Nanda Mahārāja with these true and pleasing words of inquiry, Akrūra forgot the fatigue of his journey.

COMMENTARY: He who was a family member harassed by Kaṁsa (*saḥ*) or who was afraid because of the offense of taking the Lord from Vraja, forgot his fatigue of *saṁsāra* (what to speak of the road's fatigue). Instead of *saḥ, su-bhājitaḥ* (well respected) is also found. He gave up fatigue because of Nanda's questions or he gave up fatigue because of Nanda who was questioned by Akrūra about his health, since devotees inquire from each other about their health.

---

[1] Kaàsa was actually a cousin since Ugrasena, his father, and Devaka, Devaké's father, were brothers.

Chapter Thirty-nine
Akrūra's Vision

Text 39.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
sukhopaviṣṭaḥ paryaṅke rama-kṛṣṇoru-mānitaḥ
lebhe manorathān sarvān pathi yān sa cakāra ha

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having been honored so much by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra, seated comfortably on a couch, felt that all the desires he had contemplated on the road were now fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: He, who inspires me to explain the pastimes which immediately throws the whole world into an ocean of suffering, is my goal.

He was sitting comfortably on a couch. This shows that he was welcomed properly, for till that time he was welcomed as a guest. Being respected by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, his desires were fulfilled since the two had embraced him. He received even more than he had desired (*uru*). *Bhagavāṁs tam abhipretya*: Kṛṣṇa drew him close. (SB 10.38.36) In verse 4, Kṛṣṇa addresses him as "uncle." What he desired Balaṛāma to ask was asked by Kṛṣṇa himself.

Or after sitting comfortably, he was further respected by offerings of cloth and ornaments by the two boys. Balarāma is mentioned first because he was most prominent in respecting Akrūra. *Ha* indicates joy or means "clearly."

Text 39.2

kim alabhyaṁ bhagavati prasanne śrī-niketane
tathāpi tat-parā rājan na hi vāñchanti kiñcana

My dear King, what is unattainable for one who has satisfied the Supreme Lord, the shelter of the goddess of fortune? Even so, those who are dedicated to his devotional service never want anything from him.

COMMENTARY: By having his desire fulfilled to take Kṛṣṇa from Gokula, the people of Vraja developed hatred for him. What cannot be obtained by satisfying the Lord, the abode of Mahā-lakṣmī, endowed with all types of

wealth and good qualities, who manifests unlimited powers (*bhagavati*)? Everything—material wealth, *siddhis*, liberation and *bhakti* can be easily attained. What was astonishing, if he attained what he desired by entering the Lord's house and being welcomed? But those who are dedicated to the Lord do not desire anything besides the Lord. The desire for enjoyment or for independence with many desires would destroy the dedication. *Na abhivāñchanti* (instead of *na hi vāñchanti*) means "they do not desire at all." Or they do not desire because they fear the destruction of their dedication. O King! You understand this.

Or "Why did Akrūra not desire the destruction of evil Kaṁsa who harmed the Yadu dynasty? That would be fulfilled at this time." One who has satisfied the Lord attains everything. The Lord's chest is the abode of Lakṣmī. He is controlled by his devotees. Since nothing is unobtainable, he will be immediately killed by the Lord's power. Thus the devotees do not desire anything except the Lord. They do not even desire to see the Lord since they only desire to dedicate themselves to him. Or the Lord, since he knows their dedication, gives them spiritual happiness, rare, even though they do not desire it.

Or "Why did the Lord embrace Akrūra, when it is rare even for Lakṣmī?" This verse answers. He is the abode of all beauty. Or he is served by Lakṣmī, who does great austerities. He is the supreme object of service. He was pleased. Therefore those who are completely dedicated receive in the same manner (*tathā*). They desire (*na vāñchanti kiṁca na*) to satisfy the Lord. This desire arises in them by dedicating themselves to him.

Text 39.3

sāyantanāśanaṁ kṛtvā bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
suhṛtsu vṛttaṁ kaṁsasya papracchānyac cikīrṣitam

After the evening meal, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, asked Akrūra how Kaṁsa was treating their dear relatives and friends and what the King was planning to do.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa took his evening meal. Eating twice on Dvādaśī is not against the rules for a person who has not taken *upanāyanam* (sacred thread). After becoming a *brahmācārī* the rule applies. *Aṣṭavarṣādhiko*

bālaḥ: the rules apply to a child above eight years. And the rules apply mainly to *brāhmaṇas,* since they take *upanāyanam* when eight years of age.

Since he was born of Devakī, and was dedicated to helping devotees (*bhagavān*), he asked how Kaṁsa was treating the Yadus. Or generally he wanted to help because they were friends. He asked what else Kaṁsa was planning at the moment. By asking these questions he showed Kaṁsa's fault in causing affliction, and showed his affection for his mother and devotees in general. Or the Lord, though omniscient (*bhagavān*), asked. "Why?" He was the son of Devakī. This shows he was performing human pastimes.

Text 39.4

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tāta saumyāgataḥ kaccit sv-āgataṁ bhadram astu vaḥ
api sva-jñāti-bandhūnām anamīvam anāmayam

The Supreme Lord said: My dear, gentle Uncle Akrūra was your trip here comfortable? May all good fortune be yours. Are our well-wishing friends and our relatives, both close and distant, happy and in good health?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since he was a paternal uncle, Kṛṣṇa addresses him like a father (*tāta*). O gentle one (*saumya*), possessing good qualities! Both names indicate great respect. The plural verb *āgatāḥ* (you came) and plural pronoun *vaḥ* (you) also indicate respect. Another version has *āgataḥ* in the singular. May you have auspiciousness! The question and the blessing are according to proper conduct but are also meant to pacify Akrūra, who has come with feelings of lowliness. Are you free of sorrow and ill health? These two are general and particular questions about the lack of suffering. Or, his coming was actually impossible. Kṛṣṇa satisfies him by being joyful that he could succeed. This will be expressed also in verse 7 where he says "By good fortune you have come." In this verse he says "Have you come here in comfort (*svāgatam kāccit āgataḥ*)?"

Text 39.5

kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalaṁ pṛcche edhamāne kulāmaye
kaṁse mātula-nāmnāṅga svānāṁ nas tat-prajāsu ca

But, my dear Akrūra, as long as Kaṁsa—that disease of our family who goes by the name "maternal uncle"—is still prospering, why should I even bother to ask about the well-being of our family members and his other subjects?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa asked if Akrūra was free of disease. Here he reveals the meaning of the question by stating that Kaṁsa is the disease in the family. When Kaṁsa stops his persecution, Akrūra will be free of disease. He is a maternal uncle in name only since he is actually a disease. He has appeared to create problems within the family, not from outside. It is not a disease afflicting one person, but the whole dynasty. Therefore he should be destroyed. Until this time he was not noticed because he went by the name of "uncle." Why ask about our family or his subjects (*tat-prajāsu*)? Or why ask about his followers who are like his younger brothers (*tat-prajāsu*), who are also prospering?

Text 39.6

aho asmad abhūd bhūri pitror vṛjinam āryayoḥ
yad-dhetoḥ putra-maraṇaṁ yad-dhetor bandhanaṁ tayoḥ

Just see how much suffering I have caused my offenseless parents! Because of me, their sons were killed and they themselves imprisoned.

COMMENTARY: He remembered the suffering of his parents with himself as the cause and repents. *Aho* indicates lamentation. The plural is used to indicate Balarāma and others or to respect those to whom he caused suffering. *Yad-dhetoḥ* is repeated to indicate that he was the sole cause. I am the cause. This gives a reason for going to Mathurā and giving relief to Akrūra.

Text 39.7

diṣṭyādya darśanaṁ svānāṁ mahyaṁ vaḥ saumya kāṅkṣitam
sañjātaṁ varṇyatāṁ tāta tavāgamana-kāraṇam

By good fortune the desire of our relatives to see me has been fulfilled. O gentle uncle, please tell us why you have come.

COMMENTARY: "If you knew your parents were suffering, why did you stay indifferent for so long?" I could not go unless urged by some relative. He first pacifies Akrūra who actually had the desire to take Kṛṣṇa to kill Kaṁsa. *Vaḥ* in the plural indicates respect. O gentle one (*saumya*), Akrūra (same meaning)! This is uttered with respect. He does not say his name directly. Or it indicates his gentle nature. He also addresses him as uncle (*tāta*). Because I respect you, everything will be accomplished.

Text 39.8

śrī-śuka uvāca
pṛṣṭo bhagavatā sarvaṁ varṇayām āsa mādhavaḥ
vairānubandhaṁ yaduṣu vasudeva-vadhodyamam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: In response to the Supreme Lord's request, Akrūra, the descendant of Madhu, described the whole situation, including Kaṁsa's enmity toward the Yadus and his attempt to murder Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY: Asked by the Lord, Akrūra related in summary the many events in two verses (8-9). In the description he shows the present condition and does not hide the truth. He spoke this to the Lord who displays his unlimited qualities to the dedicated devotees.

Akrūra was born in the dynasty of Madhu and was thus allies with Kṛṣṇa. Like the bee which takes the honey, Akrūra spoke a little here and there, which was the essence of what had happened. Kaṁsa began to act inimical to the Yadus in general (*anubandham*) or acted constantly against them. Kaṁsa was eager to kill Vasudeva. He does not mention Kaṁsa's name, since one should not utter anything inauspicious.

Text 39.9

yat-sandeśo yad-arthaṁ vā dūtaḥ sampreṣitaḥ svayam
yad uktaṁ nāradenāsya sva-janmānakadundubheḥ

Akrūra relayed the message he had been sent to deliver. He also described Kaṁsa's real intentions and how Nārada had informed Kaṁsa that Kṛṣṇa had been born as the son of Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY: *Svayam* means Akrūra. "Why did you wait so long and only now have come?" He related Nārada's words. He explained his intention to take Kṛṣṇa along with his father and brother to Mathurā from Gokula (*yad-artham*) and what Kaṁsa had told him. Śukadeva does not give details of these talks out of his pain. *Hari-vaṁśa* gives more details.

śvaḥ purīṁ mathurāṁ tāta gamiṣyāmaḥ sukhāya vai
yāsyanti ca vrajāḥ sarve sagokula-parigrahāḥ
kaṁsājñayā samucitaṁ karam ādāya vārṣikam
samṛddhas tasya kaṁsasya bhaviṣyati dhanurmahaḥ
taṁ drakṣyatha samṛddhaṁ ca svajanaṁ ca sameṣyatha
pitaraṁ vasudevaṁ ca satataṁ duḥkha-bhājanam
dīnaṁ putra-vadhaśrāntaṁ yuvām atha sameṣyathaḥ
satataṁ pīḍyamānaṁ ca kaṁsenāśubha-buddhinā
daśānte śoṣitaṁ vṛddhaṁ duḥkhaiḥ śithilatāṁ gatam
kaṁsasya ca bhayāt trastaṁ bhavadbhyāṁ ca vinākṛtam
dahyamānaṁ divā rātrau sotkaṇṭhenāntarātmanā
tāṁ ca drakṣyāmi govinda putrair amṛdita-stanīm
devakīṁ deva-saṁkāśāṁ sidantīṁ vihata-prabhām
putraśokena śuṣyantīṁ tvad darśana-parāyaṇām
viyoga-śoka-saṁtaptāṁ vivatsām iva saurabhīm
upaplutekṣaṇāṁ nityaṁ nityaṁ malina-vāsasam
svarbhānu-vadana-grastāṁ śaśāṅkasya prabhām iva
tvad-darśana-parāṁ nityaṁ tavāgamana-kāṅkṣiṇīm
tvat-pravṛttena śokena sīdantīṁ vai tapasvinīm
tatprabheṣv akuśalāṁ tvayā bālye viyojitām
arūpajñāṁ tava vibho vaktrasyāsyendu-varcasaḥ
yadi tvāṁ janayitvā sā kliśyate kṛṣṇa devakī
apatyārtho nu kas tasyā varaṁ hy evānapatyatā
tvaṁ tu śakra-samaḥ putro yasyās tvat-sadṛśo guṇaiḥ
pareṣām apy abhayado na sā śocitum arhati
vṛddhau tavāmbāpitarau para-bhṛtyatvam āgatau
bharstyete tvat-kṛte tena kaṁsenāśubha-buddhinā

yadi te devakī mānyā pṛthivīvātma-dhāriṇī
tāṁ śoka-salile magnām uttārayitum arhasi
taṁ ca vṛddhaṁ priyasutaṁ vasudevaṁ sukhocitam
putra-yogena saṁyojya kṛṣṇa dharmam avāpsyasi
yathā nāgaḥ sudurvṛtto damito yamunā-hrade
vipulaś ca dhṛtaḥ śailo yathā vai bhū-dharas tvayā
darpotsikaś ca balavān ariṣṭo vinipātitaḥ
para-prāṇa-haraḥ keśī duṣṭātmā ca hatas tvayā
etenaiva prayatnena vṛddhāv uddhṛtya duḥkhitau
yathā dharmam avāpnoṣi tat kṛṣṇa paricintyatām
nirbhartsyamāno yair dṛṣṭaḥ pitā te kṛṣṇa saṁsadi
te sarve cakrur aśrūṇi netrair duḥkhānvitā bhṛśam
garbhāv akṛntanādīni duḥkhāni ca bahūny api
mātā te devakī kṛṣṇa kaṁsasya sahate 'vaśā

We will go happily to Mathurā tomorrow. All the people of Vraja will go along with their families, taking the yearly tax as ordered by Kaṁsa. The festival of the great bow of Kaṁsa will be held. You will see prosperity and meet your relatives. You will meet Vasudeva, your father, always grieving and miserable, exhausted because his sons were killed. He is always in pain, thinking of Kaṁsa's evil. He has aged, is dried up, with a limp body, and is almost dead. He is fearful of Kaṁsa, and burns day and night, internally and externally, out of longing in separation from you and Balarāma. O Govinda! You will see Devakī, her breasts unsucked by sons. She is depressed, like a *devatā* without effulgence, dried up because of lamentation for her sons. She depends on seeing you. She is afflicted with lamentation in separation from you, like a cow without her calf. Her eyes are continually filled with tears. Her clothing is soiled. She resembles the moon devoured by Rāhu. She longs to see you, and desires your coming at all times. Depressed because of lamentation for you, she has become austere. She has lost all power because of being separated from you when you were a baby. O Lord! She does not know the effulgence of your moon-like face. O Kṛṣṇa! Having given birth to you, if she suffers, what is the purpose of having a son? It is better she had no children. There is only suffering for women without sons. You are her son equal to Indra, with qualities similar to him. You should give fearlessness to others. She should

not lament. Your elderly parents have become subservient to others. For you, they endure chastisement from evil-minded Kaṁsa. Since Devakī, tolerant like the earth, respects you, you must deliver her, for she is inundated in an ocean of suffering. O Kṛṣṇa! You must be reunited with elderly Vasudeva, affectionate to you, and attain dharma. Just as you subdued the wicked snake in the lake of the Yamunā, just as you held up the huge mountain as if holding up the earth, so you killed strong, proud Ariṣṭa and evil, murderous Keśī. O Kṛṣṇa! You should deliver your parents with care, and attain dharma. Think of this. Those who saw your father scolded by Kaṁsa in the assembly became filled with grief and shed tears. Your mother Devakī, dependent on Kaṁsa, bears unlimited suffering, which tears apart her womb.

He said this to invoke the Lord's compassion.

Text 39.10

śrutvākrūra-vacaḥ kṛṣṇo balaś ca para-vīra-hā
prahasya nandaṁ pitaraṁ rājñā diṣṭaṁ vijajñatuḥ

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the vanquishers of heroic opponents, laughed when they heard Akrūra's words. The Lords then informed their father, Nanda Mahārāja, concerning Kaṁsa's orders.

COMMENTARY: The two boys were vanquishers of the heroism of enemies. They laughed with disregard for Kaṁsa, since killing him was easy. Because Akrūra spoke with affection, fear and humility, they would go with gifts to Mathurā for the festival ordered by Kaṁsa. But they did not speak about the suffering of Vasudeva and Devakī described by Akrūra, or the words of Nārada. They spoke to Nanda because he was their father and because the king had given this order. They must thus inform Nanda.

Or hearing the cruel words (*krūra-vacaḥ*), to comfort Nanda, Kṛṣṇa smiled, since his father was controlled by his affection. They revealed everything because they were killers of enemies of heroism. They wanted to kill Kaṁsa.

Texts 39.11–12

gopān samādiśat so 'pi gṛhyatāṁ sarva-go-rasaḥ
upāyanāni gṛhṇīdhvaṁ yujyantāṁ śakaṭāni ca
yāsyāmaḥ śvo madhu-purīṁ dāsyāmo nṛpate rasān
drakṣyāmaḥ su-mahat parva yānti jānapadāḥ kila
evam āghoṣayat kṣatrā nanda-gopaḥ sva-gokule

Nanda Mahārāja then issued orders to the cowherd men by having the village constable make the following announcement throughout Nanda's domain of Vraja: "Go collect all the available milk products. Bring valuable gifts and yoke your wagons. Tomorrow we shall go to Mathurā, present our milk products to the King and see a very great festival. The residents of all the outlying districts are also going."

COMMENTARY: The king of the cowherd (*saḥ*) did not disagree, but rather (*api*) ordered the cowherds. This indicates Śukadeva's lamentation. *Madhupurim* indicates that they would be happy there. There would be no suffering. He says this to pacify the cowherds. The word *kila* at the end of the statement indicates that the festival would be attractive.

Nanda was the protector of the cows and Vraja (*gopaḥ*). He was the king, and thus made the announcement. He was the protector of Gokula (*gopaḥ*). But if he protected them, who would protect him? That is indicated by the word *gopaḥ*

Text 39.13

gopyas tās tad upaśrutya babhūvur vyathitā bhṛśam
rāma-kṛṣṇau purīṁ netum akrūraṁ vrajam āgatam

When the young *gopīs* heard that Akrūra had come to Vraja to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to the city, they became extremely distressed.

COMMENTARY: The *gopīs* heard from someone talking or from the announcement (*upaśrutya*), since they could not have heard directly. They were extremely pained. In their extreme distress, they felt that death was preferable. Or hearing the announcement, they were pained and later, hearing that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would go, they became greatly pained.

Text 39.14

kāścit tat-kṛta-hṛt-tāpa śvāsa-mlāna-mukha-śriyaḥ
sraṁsad-dukūla-valaya keśa-granthyaś ca kāścana

Some *gopīs* felt so pained at heart that their faces turned pale from their heavy breathing. Others were so anguished that their dresses, bracelets and braids became loose.

COMMENTARY: Three verses describe the different reactions of different groups of *gopīs*, according to differing *bhāvas*. The announcement (*tat-kṛta*) caused the reactions. It was described in the explanation of the previous verse that some *gopīs* reacted just on hearing of the announcement. Just on hearing they became aggrieved—not by first taking a few seconds to understand the meaning. Their natural beauty faded. They felt extreme pain in their hearts. Their clothing became loose because of the intense grief at immanent separation.

Text 39.15

anyāś ca tad-anudhyāna nivṛttāśeṣa-vṛttayaḥ
nābhyajānann imaṁ lokam ātma-lokaṁ gatā iva

Other *gopīs* entirely stopped their sensory activities and became fixed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa. They lost all awareness of the external world, just like those who attain the platform of self-realization.

COMMENTARY: They were like persons who had attained their *svarūpa* (*ātma-lokam*)*, jīvanmuktas.* The example shows that they forgot about their bodies. Or they meditated on Kṛṣṇa going. “How will he go there? How will he stay there? How will we continue to live?” And by that, they stopped the functions of their minds. They were not aware of their bodies or things related to the body at all.

Text 39.16

smarantyaś cāparāḥ śaurer anurāga-smiteritāḥ
hṛdi-spṛśaś citra-padā giraḥ sammumuhuḥ striyaḥ

And still other young women fainted simply by remembering the words of Kṛṣṇa. These words, decorated with wonderful phrases and expressed with affectionate smiles, would deeply touch the young girls’ hearts.

COMMENTARY: *Śaureḥ* indicates that he was born in the Śūra dynasty to manifest his nature as Bhagavān. *Śauri* means the son of the lord of Vraja (Nanda). Madhvācārya quotes Brahmā's statement:

tasmai varaḥ sa mayā sannisṛṣṭaḥ
sa cāsa nāndākhya utāsya bhāryā
nāmnā yaśodā sa ca śūra-tāta-
sutasya vaiśyā-prabhavasya gopaḥ

I have given the boon to Nanda whose wife was named Yaśodā. He was a cowherd coming through Śūra's father (Devamīḍha) and a *vaiśya* mother. *Bhārata-tātparya*

This indicates his form, qualities and pastimes. His words gave happiness to the mind because his smiles expressed his *anurāga.* His words were most attractive because of meaning and results, since they were filled with the *rasa* of *prema*. They caused joy when heard. The combination of words was also astonishing with alliteration and double meanings. They fainted for a long time (*sammumuhuḥ*). Because they were women, they immediately reached this condition. Or because they were women, it was unsuitable that they lament in this way.

The different groups reacted differently, with increasing symptoms in the sequence of verses. Some were kaniṣṭhas, some were madhyamas and some were uttamas. One gopī was the best of all. Or there were gopīs who were previously sages, śrutis, wives of devatās and nitya-siddhas. These are described in three verses (14-16) in order.

Or maugdhya with mārdava (mṛdu) and prākharya types and prauḍha with mārdava and prākharya types are shown. Some who were pained were mṛdu-mugdha. Those whose clothes loosened were prakhara-mugdhas. Those who meditated on him were mṛdu-prauḍhas. Those who fainted were prakhara-prauḍhas.

Or some were unmarried young girls or married and very young. Some were married and prauḍha. Others were attached only to Kṛṣṇa and performed Kātyāyanī-vrata. Among them, some were unmarried and some had an appearance of being married. The different types reacted as described in the verses.

Texts 39.17–18

gatiṁ su-lalitāṁ ceṣṭāṁ snigdha-hāsāvalokanam
śokāpahāni narmāṇi proddāma-caritāni ca
cintayantyo mukundasya bhītā viraha-kātarāḥ
sametāḥ saṅghaśaḥ procur aśru-mukhyo 'cyutāśayāḥ

The *gopīs* were frightened at the prospect of even the briefest separation from Mukunda, so now, as they remembered his graceful gait, pastimes, affectionate smiling glances, his joking words, and his intimate pastimes with them, they were beside themselves with the fright of the great separation. They gathered in groups and spoke to one another, their faces covered with tears and their minds fully absorbed in Acyuta.

COMMENTARY: Two verses describe how they gathered together crying in lamentation, to cancel the separation. They remembered his gait, like that of an intoxicated elephant. This was most beautiful. The phrase *sulalitām* can modify the other words in the sentence also. The description is representative of his other actions as well. His acts were heroic feats like killing Pūtanā (*ceṣṭam*). These are acts involving the whole body. Or it can refer to his manifestation of qualities like mercy. His glance was endowed with a charming smile. This indicates his sweetness. His jokes (words) completely removed all lamentation—dissatisfaction and regret or fear of their husbands. His pastimes such as the *rāsa* dance were most astonishing (*proddāma*). These pastimes also removed all lamentation (*ca*). Thus his qualities, form, words and pastimes were all sweet. He bestowed the highest bliss (*mukundasya*) through his gait, qualities, etc.

By their nature, they were afraid of separation. Now however, they were pained at the approaching separation. Previously, they gathered in their separate groups but now they all gathered together. They spoke (*procuḥ*) in pitiful voices which would break wood or stone. Because they were weeping, their faces were covered with tears. The cause was that they had taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, who never deviates from his qualities of favoring the suffering souls. Will he come back at some time because of our painful cries, since he favors the miserable?

Or "In travelling one should feel it is auspicious and not cry in lamentation." Our discrimination has disappeared because our hearts have been

permanently stolen by him (*acyuta*). Or they became lost in thought about the present instructions since their minds did not deviate (*acyuta*) from Kṛṣṇa or his gait, etc. Or their fixed minds were the cause of continuously thinking of him and all other actions mentioned in the verse.

Text 39.19

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ
aho vidhātas tava na kvacid dayā
saṁyojya maitryā praṇayena dehinaḥ
tāṁś cākṛtārthān viyunaṅkṣy apārthakaṁ
vikrīḍitaṁ te ’rbhaka-ceṣṭitaṁ yathā

The *gopīs* said: O Providence, you have no mercy! You bring embodied creatures together in friendship and love and then senselessly separate them before they fulfill their desires. This whimsical play of yours is like a child’s game.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In being separated from Kṛṣṇa, they search out another reason. Thinking the creator is the cause they criticize him in three verses (19-21). *Aho* expresses lamentation. O creator, you make everything happen! You should be merciful to all living beings but do not have any mercy at all. They indicate his lack of mercy by showing what he does. The *jīvas* living here and there, identifying with their bodies, are brought together as friends only and then develop affection. This is your arrangement. They indicate that in their meeting with Kṛṣṇa they have no qualities to deserve it. It is arranged by the creator. The word *api* means “and.” Then you separate them though they are not fully satisfied, and they have become useless in their various actions. *Apārthakam* means “that which has no goal.” Why do you bring them together? Without being satisfied, why do you separate them? We do not understand. If there is a reason and a goal, it is improper to suddenly separate those who have come together. An example of uselessness is given. Your playing is like actions of a child, which have no reason or goal. The actions are performed out of foolishness. In his commentary Śrīdhara Svāmī says that *maitryā* means “affection based on performing beneficial acts.” *Praṇayena* means “affection based on a

relationship of love." Or you bring together people with friendship, which is actually pure *prema,* and then separate them.

Text 39.20

yas tvaṁ pradarśyāsita-kuntalāvṛtaṁ
mukunda-vaktraṁ su-kapolam un-nasam
śokāpanoda-smita-leśa-sundaraṁ
karoṣi pārokṣyam asādhu te kṛtam

Having shown us Mukunda's face, framed by dark locks and beautified by his fine cheeks, raised nose and gentle smiles, which eradicate all misery, you are now making that face invisible. This behavior of yours is not at all good.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

So much for a general description of your actions! Now we will speak of what is really outrageous. You showed that face in an excellent way, with its indications of *rasa* (*pra-darśya*). That face was surrounded by black, curly locks of hair, spread like bees over the upper forehead, making the top portion beautiful. On the sides of the face are two beautiful cheeks. The nose creates beauty in the middle. The inside is beautiful with the sweetness of teeth surrounded by his red lips slightly open with a sweet smile, which removes all suffering. Because you make this beautiful face invisible to us, your action is improper.

sāraṁ samasta-goṣṭhasya vidhinā haratā harim
prahṛtaṁ gopa-yoṣitsu nirghṛṇena durātmanā

The cruel creator who breaks relationships has separated Kṛṣṇa, the life of all Vraja, from the *gopīs. Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Or, having shown us clearly the face of he who delivers us from all suffering you have made it invisible. *Pārokṣyam* is formed like *caturvarṇyam*, meaning "pertaining to invisibility." That is your unjust act. What to speak of causing separation of those who come together with friendship and love, just showing us his face is to be criticized. What then to speak of showing his face in detail (*pra-darśya*). They then reveal the details of his face.

Text 39.21

krūras tvam akrūra-samākhyayā sma naś
cakṣur hi dattaṁ harase batājña-vat
yenaika-deśe 'khila-sarga-sauṣṭhavaṁ
tvadīyam adrākṣma vayaṁ madhu-dviṣaḥ

O Providence, though you come here with the name Akrūra, you are indeed cruel, for like a fool you are taking away what you once gave us—those eyes with which we have seen, the perfection of your entire creation in just one feature of Kṛṣṇa's form, which derides all other sweetness.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Certainly (*hi*) you have stolen him. *Bata* indicates lamentation. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

aho gopī-janasyāsya darśayitvā mahā-indhim
utkṛttāny adya netrāṇi vidhātrā karuṇātmanā

Having shown the one great treasure to the *gopīs,* the merciful creator has torn out their eyes today.

This is like a person who does not know sin and piety, who takes back what he has given. Though you are omniscient you act like a fool. Since you end up by giving us the greatest suffering this is more sinful than doing an act in ignorance. How did you steal our eyes? By those eyes we saw the pinnacle of all beauty in your creation, in one particle of Kṛṣṇa. We saw in a portion of a portion of the ocean of beauty of his eyes and face the perfection of the beauty of the lotus and moon. Since our eyes have no taste for any other object, by taking him, you have taken our eyes as well. *Madhudviṣaḥ* (killer of sweetness) here indicates that Kṛṣṇa's sweetness makes all sweetness derived from material objects or liberation useless. He is endowed with all qualities since he is "like Nārāyaṇa." Or he takes away (*dveṣṭi*) the sweetness of liberation and material enjoyment (*madhu*) from his devotees. Or, he is the hater (*dviṣaḥ*) of Kaṁsa who is called *madhu* since he was the king of Madhupuri (Mathurā) and was thus equivalent to

the city. If he kills Kaṁsa and attains the kingdom, he will not come back here.

Text 39.22

na nanda-sūnuḥ kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-sauhṛdaḥ
samīkṣate naḥ sva-kṛtāturā bata
vihāya gehān sva-janān sutān patīṁs
tad-dāsyam addhopagatā nava-priyaḥ

Alas, Nanda's son, who breaks loving friendships in a second, will not even look directly at us. Forcibly brought under his control, we abandoned our homes, relatives, children and husbands just to serve him, but he is nevertheless exceptionally pleasing in appearance while he leaves.

COMMENTARY: *Na* is placed first in the sentence, expressing negation, but with respect. Because he is the son of a cowherd (*nanda-sunuḥ*), he should look at us, but in departing he does not even glance at us, or in going to Mathurā he does not even consider us—because, in a moment, he breaks friendships. "Being indifferent to people there, after some time he will think of us." He will ignore us because we have been enjoyed so much previously. He likes new things (*nava-priyaḥ*).

Or seeing Kṛṣṇa who does not look at the *gopīs* or worry about their intense suffering, they speak. Shall we criticize the creator? The son of Nanda does not see us. He should see us by his nature, since he is the son of Nanda. They describe their qualification according to their *bhāva*. We have given up houses, relatives, sons and husbands (in order of increasing excellence) and gained at close hand (*upa*) service directly (*addhā*) by giving our bodies, etc. The specialty of their *dāsya* is indicated by this. The reason for attaining him is that he has made us desire him (*sva-kṛtāturāḥ*).

Or "Your beloved is going on his own. What is my fault?" They speak to the creator. He does not break his friendship easily, since he is Nanda's son. He should not ignore us since we are solely devoted to him. O creator! He does notice us, since he made us desire him. We have become his servants, giving up everything. Otherwise, we would be ungrateful. And moreover, he is most attractive (*nava-priyaḥ*).

Text 39.23

sukhaṁ prabhātā rajanīyam āśiṣaḥ
satyā babhūvuḥ pura-yoṣitāṁ dhruvam
yāḥ saṁpraviṣṭasya mukhaṁ vrajas-pateḥ
pāsyanty apāṅgotkalita-smitāsavam

This night will certainly bring joy to the women of Mathurā. All their hopes will now be fulfilled, for as the Lord of Vraja enters their city, they will be able to drink from his face the nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of his eyes.

COMMENTARY: Long held hopes of the women of Mathurā or the blessing of *brāhmaṇas* have now born fruit. They will see his sweet smile endowed with loving glances. The whole phrase can modify the verb also. His special *bhāvas* indicate the good fortune of the women of Mathurā. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

suprabhātādya rajanī mathurā-vāsayoṣitām
pāsyanty acyuta-vaktrābjaṁ yāsāṁ netrāli-paṅktayaḥ

The night today is glorious for the women of Mathurā, since their eyes will see the lotus face of Acyuta.

Text 39.24

tāsāṁ mukundo madhu-mañju-bhāṣitair
gṛhīta-cittaḥ para-vān manasvy api
kathaṁ punar naḥ pratiyāsyate 'balā
grāmyāḥ salajja-smita-vibhramair bhraman

O *gopīs,* although our Mukunda is intelligent and very obedient to his parents, once he has fallen under the spell of the honey-sweet words of the women of Mathurā and been enchanted by their alluring, shy smiles, how will he ever return to us unsophisticated village girls?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He will completely forget everything (*bhraman*) because of the women of Mathurā. Though he is obedient to his parents (*para-vān*) he will fall under

their control (*gṛhīta-cittaḥ*). Or, because he falls under their control (*gṛhīta-cittaḥ*) he will be dependent on those women (*para-vān*).

mathurāṁ prāpya govindaḥ kathaṁ gokulam eṣyati
nagara-strī-kalālāpa-madhu śrotreṇa pāsyati
vilāsi-vākya-pāneṣu nāgarīṇāṁ kṛtāspadam
cittam asya kathaṁ bhūyo grāmya-gopīṣu yāsyati
grāmyo harir ayaṁ tāsāṁ vilāsa-nigaḍair yutaḥ
bhavatīnāṁ punaḥ pārśvaṁ kayā yuktyā sameṣyati

If Govinda goes to Mathurā, why will he return to Gokula? He will drink the honey of the city women's arts and speech with his ears. How will his heart, relishing their words and gestures, on taking shelter of them, return to rustic gopīs? This village boy will be bound by the chains of their flirting. By what logic will he return to you women of Gokula? *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

This shows that falling under their control (*gṛhīta-cittaḥ*) he will be dependent on those Mathurā women (*para-vān*).

Text 39.25

adya dhruvaṁ tatra dṛśo bhaviṣyate
dāśārha-bhojāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām
mahotsavaḥ śrī-ramaṇaṁ guṇāspadaṁ
drakṣyanti ye cādhvani devakī-sutam

When the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas see the son of Devakī in Mathurā, they will certainly enjoy a great festival for their eyes, as will all those who see him traveling along the road to the city. After all, he is the darling of the goddess of fortune and the reservoir of all qualities.

COMMENTARY: The groups mentioned are various members of the Yadu dynasty. Though there were others like the Kukuras, these were the main groups. They will see the person who gives pleasure to Lakṣmī (*śrī-ramaṇam*) or he who gives pleasure the world by his great beauty. This indicates his great beauty and attractive dress. He is the abode of all qualities, such as his merciful glance and sweet pastimes. He has appeared in the Dāśārha family (*devakī-sutam*). Or Devakī can mean Yaśodā as

previously explained. Those living on the road and travelers will also see him.

dhanyāste pathi ye kṛṣṇam ito yāntam anivāritāḥ
udvahiṣyanti paśyantaḥ sva-dehaṁ pulakāñcitam
mathurā-nagarī-paura-nayanānāṁ mahotsavaḥ
govindāvayavair dṛṣṭair atīvādya bhaviṣyati
ko nu svapnaḥ sva-bhāgyābhir dṛṣṭas tābhir adhokṣajam
vistāritānta-nayanā yā drakṣyanty anivāritāḥ

Fortunate are the people on the path who see Kṛṣṇa without obstruction. Their hairs stand on end. There will be a great joy for the eyes of Mathurā's citizens when they see his limbs. What dream have I seen? With wide eyes, they will see him unobstructed with their fortunate eyes. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Text 39.26

maitad-vidhasyākaruṇasya nāma bhūd
akrūra ity etad atīva dāruṇaḥ
yo 'sāv anāśvāsya su-duḥkhitam janaṁ
priyāt priyaṁ neṣyati pāram adhvanaḥ

He who is doing this merciless deed should not be called Akrūra. He is so extremely cruel that without even trying to console the sorrowful residents of Vraja, he is taking away Kṛṣṇa, who is dearer to us than life itself to a far-off place.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since *iti* also means *etad*, Śrīdhara Svāmī does not say *ity etad* in his commentary. Or as in the usage *ity evam ādi* the phrase *iti etad* is permissible according to the example of *go-balī-varda*. He is most cruel. That person (*asau*), (whom they cannot even mention because of his cruelty), is taking Kṛṣṇa. Or that person, who we can see over there, is taking Kṛṣṇa. He does not even console the people by saying, "I am taking him, and will bring him back to you." He should at least give some general consolation to the people (*janam*). What to speak of consoling us weak women. The addition of *su* (very) in *su-duḥkhitam* indicates that very soon he will be responsible for the death of women. Thus he is very cruel.

kiṁ na vetti nṛśaṁso ’yam anurāga-paraṁ janam
yenaivam akṣṇor āhlādaṁ nayaty anyatra no harim

Does this cruel person not know about people having great love? He takes away our Kṛṣṇa who is a joy for our eyes to some other place. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Therefore his name should be Krūra, not Akrūra. Or, he should not have the name Akrūra, or any other name with similar meaning.

Text 39.27

anārdra-dhīr eṣa samāsthito rathaṁ
tam anv amī ca tvarayanti durmadāḥ
gopā anobhiḥ sthavirair upekṣitaṁ
daivaṁ ca no ’dya pratikūlam īhate

Hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa has already mounted the chariot, and now the foolish cowherds are hurrying after him in their bullock carts. Even the elders are saying nothing to stop him. Today fate is working against us.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ah! Akrūra, a messenger of Kaṁsa, is cruel. Now the soft-hearted merciful son of Nanda has become hard-hearted towards us. They speak in extreme pain. He is hard-hearted because he is now seated firmly (*sam-sthithaḥ*) on the chariot. Foolish cowherds like Śrīdāmā hurry behind (*anu*) the chariot, using carts (*anobhiḥ*). Or, being situated among the carts, the cowherds have mounted them and move quickly. Or they hurry to go at every second (*tam anu*) since they are insane. Otherwise they would have carefully considered first.

Text 39.28

nivārayāmaḥ samupetya mādhavaṁ
kiṁ no ’kariṣyan kula-vṛddha-bāndhavāḥ
mukunda-saṅgān nimiṣārdha-dustyajād
daivena vidhvaṁsita-dīna-cetasām

Let us directly approach Mādhava and stop him from going. What can our family elders and other relatives do to us? Now that fate is separating us

from Mukunda, our hearts are already wretched, for we cannot bear to give up his association even for a fraction of a second.

COMMENTARY: Giving up shame and being bold, coming to him, we will stop him by holding his hands and clothing. He is going to protect the Yadus, having been born in the Madhu dynasty (*mādhavam*). He is attached to performing pastimes with *madhura-rasa* (*mādhavam*). We will stop him because what attachment do we have for husbands and friends, and elders following dharma?

Kåñëa may ask, "Will the *gopés* give up peaceful life and do this because of me?" We cannot give up for even half a moment he who gives the highest bliss and is most beautiful (*mukunda)*, even if it is ordained by the creator. Therefore we are miserable. Or we have been destroyed and our hearts are miserable because we cannot give him up for half a moment. A long separation will kill us. We have no relationship with the elders. All this has become insignificant by having a relationship with Mukunda. "Disregard for elders will produce infamy and a bad future life." That is fate. There is nothing more miserable than giving up Mukunda. Why think about it?

Text 39.29

yasyānurāga-lalita-smita-valgu-mantra
līlāvaloka-parirambhaṇa-rāsa-goṣṭhām
nītāḥ sma naḥ kṣaṇam iva kṣaṇadā vinā taṁ
gopyaḥ kathaṁ nv atitarema tamo durantam

When he brought us to the assembly of the *rāsa* dance, where we enjoyed his affectionate and charming smiles, his delightful secret talks, his playful glances and his embraces, we passed many nights as if they were a single moment. O *gopīs*, how can we possibly cross over the insurmountable darkness of his absence?

COMMENTARY: His gentle smiles were filled with *anurāga*, with intense *prema* of the *rāsa* dance. This conquered us. He brought us to the *rāsa* dance filled with his smiles, his conversations filled with hints of *madhura-rasa* (*valgu-mantra*), and his bewildering glances. *Sma* means certainly. *Nu* indicates lamentation. How will we cross the most expansive ocean of darkness? O *gopīs*! It is most difficult for us, so soft with *prema*.

Or “Misfortune due to karma should be tolerated by discrimination with determination.” This verse answers. Just as many nights passed with the happiness of the *rāsa* dance as if it were a second, so now with the sorrow of separation from him, a moment will be like a hundred *yugas*. We will not be able to tolerate it. Though his smiles, talks, glances and embraces out of love produced the highest bliss, in separation, remembering those features produces the greatest pain.

Text 39.30

yo ’hnaḥ kṣaye vrajam ananta-sakhaḥ parīto
gopair viśan khura-rajaś-churitālaka-srak
veṇuṁ kvaṇan smita-katākṣa-nirīkṣaṇena
cittaṁ kṣiṇoty amum ṛte nu kathaṁ bhavema

How can we exist without Kṛṣṇa, who in the evening would return to Vraja in the company of the cowherd boys and Balarāma, his hair and garland powdered with the dust raised by the cows’ hooves? As he played his flute, he would captivate our minds with his smiling sidelong glances.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ananta is one name of Saṅkarṣaṇa or Balarāma since he is white like Ananta and has unlimited strength like Ananta. Like Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma has many well-known names in Vraja. *Ananta-sakhaḥ* therefore means “the friend of Balarāma,” or “along with Balarāma.” Accompanied by Balarāma, surrounded by cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa entered Vraja in the evening. He would bewilder our hearts with *prema,* by his soft smile and his side glance looking at our breasts. *Nu* indicates worry. How can we exist without him? We will die now, right here.

Text 39.31

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ bruvāṇā virahāturā bhṛśaṁ
vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-viṣakta-mānasāḥ

visṛjya lajjāṁ ruruduḥ sma su-svaraṁ
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After speaking these words, the ladies of Vraja, who were so attached to Kṛṣṇa, felt extremely agitated by their imminent separation from him. They forgot all shame and loudly cried out, "O Govinda! O Dāmodara! O Mādhava!"

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

By the power of their lamenting words caused by intense pain of separation, they wailed using his names which intensified their sorrow. The phrase "After speaking in this way" means that they spoke other words also. The cause was the uncontrollable pain caused by separation (*virahāturā*). The cause of this was that they were the women of Vraja (*vraja-striyaḥ*), famous for natural *prema*. Their minds were attached to Kṛṣṇa in *prema*. Giving up shyness they cried loudly and pitiably (*su-svaram*). *Sma* merely completes the meter. Because of the pain they could do nothing more.

They cried out his names. O Govinda! You are the king of Gokula. Without you all of Gokula will be destroyed in a moment. O Dāmodara! The name makes Yaśodā recall her repentance at tying you up. Without you, what state will she be in, remembering that name? O Mādhava! Even Lakṣmī has secretly accepted you. *Jayati te 'dhikaṁ janmanā vrajaḥ śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi*: by your birth the land of Vraja has become exceedingly glorious, and thus Lakṣmī always resides here. (SB 10.31.1) *Satatam urasi saumya śrīr vadhūḥ sākam āste:* Lakṣmī is always with him, staying upon his chest. (SB 10.47.20) Since you are the supreme lover, you are the object of our attraction. Remembering this, they say, "How will we spend our time?" Mādhava means "he who makes Lakṣmī agitated (*mā dhunoti*)." Therefore they utter this name suitably at this time. How will we live without you, though you are the Lord spread everywhere? But in dying, we will not be able to see you! They uttered many other names also.

Text 39.32

strīṇām evaṁ rudantīnām udite savitary atha
akrūraś codayām āsa kṛta-maitrādiko ratham

But even as the *gopīs* cried out in this way, Akrūra, having at sunrise performed his morning worship and other duties, began to drive the chariot.

COMMENTARY: As the *gopīs* cried in this way, Akrūra began to depart. The grammatical structure indicates that he ignored or disrespected them. This was an offense. They deserved everyone's sympathy and they were the women of Vraja, and they were crying out of prema for Kṛṣṇa! And he departed without giving them any comfort at all. Previously, in verse 26, they had stated that they thought of him as an offender. "He is so extremely cruel that without even trying to console the sorrowful residents of Vraja he left." *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

akrūraḥ krūrahṛdayaḥ śīghraṁ prerayate hayān
eva mārtāsu yoṣitsu kṛpā kasya na jāyate

Akrūra with cruel heart began to hasten the horses. Who would not have mercy on dying women?

Those who know the glory of Gokula say that because of this offense he was later involved in the conspiracy with the Śyamantaka gem and fled Dvārakā.

At an auspicious moment after the sun rose the two boys mounted the chariot. Or he waited till the sun rose because there could be an attack by thieves at night. This would avoid cause for further lamentation by the *gopīs*. Out of great pain of separation, they could fall in front of the chariot without his noticing if he left at night. Verse 27 has already mentioned that Kṛṣṇa had mounted the chariot. It is not mentioned here because Parīkṣit would develop extreme pain. Or Śukadeva himself could not speak properly.

Text 39.33

gopās tam anvasajjanta nandādyāḥ śakaṭais tataḥ
ādāyopāyanaṁ bhūri kumbhān go-rasa-sambhṛtān

Led by Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men followed behind Kṛṣṇa in their wagons. The men brought along many offerings for the king, including clay pots filled with ghee and other milk products.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The cowherds, headed by Nanda, Sannanda and others, followed the chariot since they were afflicted with various worries. They were delayed because of (*tataḥ*) carrying excellent gifts like jewels and the pots, including pots for an auspicious journey.

Text 39.34

gopyaś ca dayitaṁ kṛṣṇam anuvrajyānurañjitāḥ
pratyādeśaṁ bhagavataḥ kāṅkṣantyaś cāvatasthire

Kṛṣṇa somewhat pacified the *gopīs*, and they also followed behind for some time. Then, hoping he would give them some instruction, they stood still.

COMMENTARY: The word *ca* means *tu,* and indicates a new topic. They were different from the cowherds who went along with Kṛṣṇa. They followed him because he was dearer than their lives (*dayitam*). If they did not follow, their *prāṇas* would follow him anyway. They were pacified by him (*anurañjitāḥ*) because he was most attractive (*kṛṣṇam*). He jumped from the chariot and embraced them and then mounted the chariot again. They waited from him to counter the instruction not to follow him (*pratyādeśam*). Or not being inclined to go, he would counteract Akrūra's words by returning. Or through messengers, he would send an answer to his previous words.

Text 39.35

tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya sva-prasthāṇe yadūttamaḥ
sāntvayām asa sa-premair āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ

As he departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the *gopīs* were lamenting, and thus he consoled them by sending messengers with this loving promise: "I will return."

COMMENTARY: As the Lord was departing, or related to his departure, seeing that the *gopīs* were in pain in an indescribable way, by various means, with *prema* (*sa-premaiḥ*), he who had appeared among the Yadus to display unlimited qualities like mercy, who was capable in this way, consoled them. Or saying "I am going in order to protect the Yadus, as the best of the Yadu dynasty, but after doing that I will return," he consoled them. *Padma Purāṇa* says that he did return after killing Dantavakra, to make his words true.

Text 39.36

yāvad ālakṣyate ketur yāvad reṇū rathasya ca
anuprasthāpitātmāno lekhyānīvopalakṣitāḥ

Sending their minds after Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* stood as motionless as figures in a painting. They remained there as long as the flag atop the chariot was visible, and even until they could no longer see the dust raised by the chariot wheels.

COMMENTARY: The *gopīs* maintained their lives at that time, but were not peaceful. As long as the flag was somewhat visible and as long as the chariot and the dust were visible, they remained, sending their hearts after him. They seemed something like painted pictures to people nearby (*upalakṣitāḥ*), since they did not move. They appeared to be there, but not actually living in those bodies. The word *ca* indicates doubt.

Text 39.37

tā nirāśā nivavṛtur govinda-vinivartane
viśokā ahanī ninyur gāyantyaḥ priya-ceṣṭitam

The *gopīs* then turned back, without hope that Govinda would ever return to them. Giving up sorrow, they began to spend their days and nights chanting about the pastimes of their beloved.

COMMENTARY: They gave up hope that the king of Gokula (*govindasya*) would turn and again enter Gokula, though they had hoped for a long time that this would not happen, since he was controlled by his devotees and could not tolerate others' suffering. "How did they maintain their lives?" They sang about activities like his killing Pūtanā or about favorite activates

like the *rāsa* dance, and gave up lamenting (*viśokāḥ*). They passed days and nights because they could maintain their lives by singing about his activities.

Or they had various sorrows (*viśokāḥ*) because they sang about him. This increased the pain of separation. Or, though they all sang, they passed their days and nights in sorrow. Or they could not even pass their days and nights because they gave up hope that he would return. The details are not given because Śukadeva was in great pain. However, *Lalita-mādhava* describes the pastimes at that time. Or they gave up lamentation by experiencing their love as if directly, by singing about his activities and becoming absorbed in them.

Some devotees explain this according to the eternal pastimes. "According to *Padma Purāṇa* (*go-gopa-gopikā-saṅge yatra krīḍati kaṁsahā*: there Kṛṣṇa plays with the cows, cowherds and *gopīs*) and Bilvamaṅgala, even today the pastimes can be seen in Vṛndāvana. How is it possible that he gives up Vraja completely?" That is true. What he did can be completely explained according to the manifested pastimes. The sages explain this pastime described in all *Purāṇas*. The eternal pastimes are most confidential and are generally hidden by the sages, who follow the will of the Lord. However, some great devotees hint slightly at this indirectly or briefly sometimes.

puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayaṁ nṛ-liṅga
gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyaḥ
gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayaṁś ca veṇuṁ
vikrīdayāñcati giritra-ramārcitāṅghriḥ

How pious are the tracts of land in Vraja, for there the oldest person, disguising himself with human traits, wanders about, enacting his many pastimes! Adorned with wonderfully variegated forest garlands, he whose feet are worshiped by Śiva and Lakṣmī vibrates his flute as he tends the cows in the company of Balarāma. SB 10.44.13

The women of Mathurā indicate the eternal pastimes by using the present tense. It is not contradictory for the Lord who is one, to have different manifestations. In one manifestation he plays in Vṛndāvana at all times.

bhuja-dvaya-yutaḥ kṛṣṇo na kadācic catur-bhujaḥ
gopyaikayā yutas tatra parikrīḍati sarvadā

Kṛṣna has two arms and never four. Along with one *gopī*, he plays in Vṛndāvana eternally. *Rudra-yamala*

The one *gopī* is Rādhā. It could be others like Lalitā but the intention is to mention the most prominent *gopī*. Eternally he plays in Vṛndāvana.

vṛndāvanaṁ parityajya sa kvacin naiva gacchati

He never gives up Vṛndāvana to go elsewhere. (*Śrī-yāmala*, quoted in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*)

He goes to Mathurā in another form. Thus all the devotees of Vraja exist in two forms for two pastimes, just as Nārada saw one Uddhava in many places in Dvārakā.

The meaning is this. The *gopīs* following the manifested pastimes gave up hope that Kṛṣṇa would return, and returned home. Uddhava will later speak Kṛṣṇa's message to them. In another form they follow the eternal pastimes. They sing about his pastimes directly in the *rāsa* dance, etc., and do not know lamentation. They are absorbed in the highest bliss.

They spend their days and nights singing about him in the manifested pastimes. They then entered the eternal pastimes as in the following:

tāsām āvirabhūc chauriḥ smayamāna-mukhāmbujaḥ
pītāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa, a smile on his lotus face, appeared before the *gopīs,* wearing a garland and a yellow garment. He directly appeared as one who can bewilder the mind of Cupid, though Cupid himself bewilders the minds of ordinary people. SB 10.32.2

Text 39.38

bhagavān api samprāpto rāmākrūra-yuto nṛpa
rathena vāyu-vegena kālindīm agha-nāśinīm

My dear King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, traveling as swiftly as the wind in that chariot with Balarāma and Akrūra, arrived at the river Kālindī, which destroys all sins.

COMMENTARY: Like the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa also experienced the greatest pain. That is indicated by the word *api.*

He was accompanied by Akrūra and Balarāma, who were at his side, giving him instructions and holding the reins. He arrived at the Yamunā suddenly, and entered into it, because the chariot travelled at the speed of the wind. The horses were swift but Akrūra used his whip to make them go faster. They arrived there at noon.

gacchanto javanāśvena rathena yamunātaṭam
praptā madhyāhna-samaye rāmākrūra-janārdanāḥ

Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Akrūra reached the bank of the Yamunā at noon, on the chariot yoked with swift horses. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

The distance from Nanda's house to the Yamunā was only twelve *krośas*. But Akrūra arrived there only at noon, going quickly. Kṛṣṇa had to console the *gopīs*. As well, to fool the cows and the *gopīs* who fell on the path, he went on a crooked path. Thus it took a long time to arrive.

O King! Śukadeva comforts suffering Parīkṣit. Or he calls out because of his own pain. He arrived at the Yamunā which destroys all offenses. Because of offending the *gopīs*, Akrūra intended to purify himself by bathing there.

Text 39.39

tatropaspṛśya pānīyaṁ pītvā mṛṣṭaṁ maṇi-prabham
vṛkṣa-ṣaṇḍam upavrajya sa-rāmo ratham āviśat

The river's sweet water was more effulgent than brilliant jewels. After Kṛṣṇa had performed *ācamana*, he drank some. Then he had the chariot moved near a grove of trees and climbed back on, along with Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: At the Yamunā he did *ācamāna* after descending from the chariot to purify himself of saliva and tears produced by separation from the *gopīs*. He drank water because of fatigue from the journey or to refresh himself because he had dried up from the pain of separation, being controlled by the *gopīs' prema*. The water shone like jewels. This indicates its purity and depth and thus its coolness. Balarāma felt the same (*sarāmaḥ*). He ascended the chariot and entered its canopy to avoid the noon sun.

Text 39.40

akrūras tāv upāmantrya niveśya ca rathopari
kālindyā hradam āgatya snānaṁ vidhi-vad ācarat

Akrūra asked the two Lords to take their seats on the chariot. Then, taking their permission, he went to a pool in the Yamunā and took his bath as enjoined in the scriptures.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the two in the chariot, fearing enemies, he took permission and went to a pool of the Yamunā. Or he placed them in the chariot fearing they would go back to Vraja. The pool was a famous *tīrtha.* According to the rules he bathed. One should offer respects to the *tīrtha* and do *ācamana*. This is explained in *Padma Purānā*, concerning the glories of the Yamunā. This is also written in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.*

Text 39.41

nimajjya tasmin salile japan brahma sanātanam
tāv eva dadṛśe 'krūro rāma-kṛṣṇau samanvitau

While immersing himself in the water and reciting eternal mantras from the Vedas, Akrūra suddenly saw Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa before him.

COMMENTARY: Immersing himself in the water he came out. He recited the eternal *agha-marṣaṇa* mantra according to some. It was necessary to chant this mantra. Or he chanted the *gāyatrī,* since it is the original mantra, the mother of the Vedas. Or he chanted mantras which were eternal because they were equal to Viṣṇu who is eternal, having arisen from him. *vedo nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣāt svayaṁbhūr iti śuśrumaḥ*: The Vedas are directly Nārāyaṇa and are born from him. This we have heard from Yamarāja. (SB 6.1.40)

Or he chanted the name of Bhagavān, who is eternal Brahman. The two whom he took permission from and who were seated on the chariot, were present there together with him (*samanvitau*) or mixed together like a mirror and reflected object in the water.

Texts 39.42–43

tau ratha-sthau katham iha sutāv ānakadundubheḥ
tarhi svit syandane na sta ity unmajjya vyacaṣṭa saḥ

tatrāpi ca yathā-pūrvam āsīnau punar eva saḥ
nyamajjad darśanaṁ yan me mṛṣā kiṁ salile tayoḥ

Akrūra thought, "How can the two sons of Vāsudeva, who are sitting in the chariot, be standing here in the water? They must have left the chariot." But when he came out of the river, they were on the chariot, just as before. Asking himself "Was the vision I had of them in the water an illusion?" Akrūra reentered the pool.

COMMENTARY: How can the two sons of Vasudeva be in the water? He had committed an offense by giving up the Lord, considering bathing to be more important. He then thought that Vasudeva was an ordinary person, calling him by that name alone (*ānakadundubheḥ*), instead of uttering "Vasudeva." By uttering Vasudeva, he would be uttering what was similar to Vāsudeva, the Lord. Are they not on the chariot? He came out of the water.

But they wereon the chariot as previously. Akrūra saw that (*vyacaṣṭa*). He again entered the water in order to see if what he had seen was false.

Texts 39.44–45

bhūyas tatrāpi so 'drākṣīt stūyamānam ahīśvaram
siddha-cāraṇa-gandharvair asurair nata-kandharaiḥ
sahasra-śirasaṁ devaṁ sahasra-phaṇa-maulinam
nīlāmbaraṁ visa-śvetaṁ śṛṅgaiḥ śvetam iva sthitam

In the water, Akrūra now saw Ananta Śeṣa, the Lord of the serpents, receiving praise from Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and demons, who all had their heads bowed. He had thousands of heads, thousands of hoods and thousands of helmets. Worthy of worship by the universe, he wore a blue garment, and was as white as the filaments of a lotus stem, like white Kailāsa Mountain with its many peaks.

COMMENTARY: Immersing himself again (*bhūyaḥ*) he saw Ananta, not the two boys whom he had seen before. Or he saw what he previously saw but with additions. Though it was extraordinary, he understood it was the two sons by some similarity. Or by the Lord's mercy, he understood. *Viṣṇu*

Purāṇa says *bala kṛṣṇau tadākrūraḥ praty abhijñāya vismitaḥ:* understanding the identity of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, Akrūra was astonished.

He saw a huge snake, served by many servant snakes. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *vṛtaṁ vāsuki-raṁbhādyair mahadbhiḥ pavanāśibhiḥ:* he was surrounded by Vāsuki, Rambha, and other great snakes. The *siddhas* are the Kumāras or the inhabitants of Pātāla, or Kapila and other sages. Asuras living in Pātāla were under Śeṣa's control. All of them were bowing down, having great *bhakti*.

Ananta is to be worshipped by the world (*devam*). As the controller of ignorance, he is to be worshipped by all, not just be people in ignorance. *Maulinam* means "possessing a garland" as per the rule *vrīhyādibhyaś ca. (Pāṇini* 5.2.116) He had crowns on his heads and garlands on his hoods. He was huge, like a white mountain. The many peaks had jewels: his many heads had crowns.

Texts 39.46–48

tasyotsaṅge ghana-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam
puruṣaṁ catur-bhujaṁ śāntam padma-patrāruṇekṣaṇam
cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ cāru-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇam
su-bhrūnnasaṁ caru-karṇaṁ su-kapolāruṇādharam
pralamba-pīvara-bhujaṁ tuṅgāṁsoraḥ-sthala-śriyam
kambu-kaṇṭhaṁ nimna-nābhiṁ valimat-pallavodaram

Akrūra then saw the Lord lying peacefully on the lap of Ananta. His complexion was like a dark-blue cloud. He wore yellow garments and had four arms and reddish lotus-petal eyes. His face looked attractive and cheerful with its smiling, endearing glance and lovely eyebrows, its raised nose and finely formed ears, and its beautiful cheeks and reddish lips. The Lord had broad shoulders and his chest was marked with the line of Lakṣmī. His arms were long and thick. His neck had three lines like a conch shell, his navel was deep, and his abdomen bore lines like those on a banyan leaf.

COMMENTARY: He saw the Lord sitting happily on the lap of Ananta.

tasyotsaṇge ghanaśyāmam śrīvatsācchāditodaram
pītāmbaradharaṁ viṣṇuṁ sūpaviṣṭaṁ dadarśa ha

He saw the Lord on the lap of Ananta. He had a dark complexion, and was seated comfortably, wearing yellow cloth, bearing the Śrīvatsa mark on his chest. *Hari-vaṁśa*

pradhāna-puruṣāv ādyau jagad-dhetū jagat-patī
avatīrṇau jagaty-arthe svāṁśena bala-keśavau

They were the primeval Lords, the masters and original causes of the universes, Keśava and Balarāma who had for the welfare of the earth now descended with their expansions. SB 10.38.32

Previously the brothers were considered equal, but now they are distinguished. Kṛṣṇa is distinguished by his mercy and other qualities. Or the display shows Kṛṣṇa's great powers as Nārāyaṇa, the cause of the universe. He had a human form (*puruṣam*), which was attractive to the mind (*śāntam*). His eyes were like lotus petals, pink at the edges. His face was beautiful and pleased (*cāru*). He was showing his beautiful smile. Or he had a pleasing smile and glance. The words *cāru* and *su* are repeated to indicate the indescribable nature of his beauty. His arms were well shaped. He had Lakṣmī or beauty on his chest. His throat had three lines like a conch.

Texts 39.49–50

bṛhat-kaṭi-taṭa-śroṇi karabhoru-dvayānvitam
cāru-jānu-yugaṁ cāru jaṅghā-yugala-saṁyutam
tuṅga-gulphāruṇa-nakha vrāta-dīdhitibhir vṛtam
navāṅguly-aṅguṣṭha-dalair vilasat-pāda-paṅkajam

He had large loins and hips, thighs tapering like the edge of the hand, and shapely knees and shanks. His raised ankles reflected the brilliant effulgence emanating from the nails on his tender, petal-like toes, which beautified his lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: His buttocks were like banks because of their width. His hips were wide. *Karabha* means the outer portion of the hand from the wrist to the little finger. This means his thighs were thick and gradually tapered downwards. Words like *anvitam* and *saṁyutam* (endowed with) indicate the great beauty of these limbs. It was not just some collection or combination of items.

O King! Śukadeva expresses joy in describing the lotus feet of the Lord, which give life to the devotees. Or he expresses fixing this description in his mind. The word *nava* indicates the beauty of his toes or the underside of his toes, pink like a new petal. Or *nava* modifies *dala* (fresh petals).

The description starts with his face and ends with his feet. Though other limbs are not mentioned, they are understood to be beautiful also.

Since his face was beautiful, his forehead and chin were beautiful. Since his smile was beautiful, his teeth were more beautiful than *kunda* flowers. Since his arms were long and well shaped, his hands were also well shaped. After describing his hips, his arms, his chest and then his neck is described. The order is according to where Akrūra's glance fell, noting the particular beauty.

Texts 39.51–52

su-mahārha-maṇi-vrāta-kirīṭa-kaṭakāṅgadaiḥ
kaṭi-sūtra-brahma-sūtra-hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ
bhrājamānaṁ padma-karaṁ śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharam
śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhaṁ vana-mālinam

Adorned with a helmet, bracelets and armlets, which were all bedecked with many priceless jewels, and also with a belt, a sacred thread, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, the Lord shone with dazzling effulgence. In one hand he held a lotus flower, in the others a conch, discus and club. Gracing his chest were the Śrīvatsa mark, the brilliant Kaustubha gem and a flower garland.

COMMENTARY: Now the ornaments are described in two verses. The "priceless jewels" were the finest jewels. The thread, necklace, anklets and earrings were also the best. He shone with all these items. He wore a sacred thread. The ornaments were all studded with gems. Or, he wore these ornaments and shone because of his natural effulgence, like a million suns. He had a lotus in his lower right hand and held a conch as well. These are mentioned because they are his chief weapons. The lotus he held for play however. Thus the word *dharam* (wielding) is not mentioned with the lotus. Starting from the lower right and going counterclockwise, the four are listed. Thus the form had four arms.

Or giving up the Lord (on the chariot) who shone directly before him, Akrūra had gone for a bath. But in this one form he saw unlimited wealth, with disregard for everything else.

Texts 39.53–55

sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ parṣadaiḥ sanakādibhiḥ
sureśair brahma-rudrādyair navabhiś ca dvijottamaiḥ
prahrāda-nārada-vasu pramukhair bhāgavatottamaiḥ
stūyamānaṁ pṛthag-bhāvair vacobhir amalātmabhiḥ
śriyā puṣṭyā girā kāntyā kīrtyā tuṣṭyelayorjayā
vidyayāvidyayā śaktyā māyayā ca niṣevitam

Encircling the Lord and worshiping him were Nanda, Sunanda and his other personal attendants; Sanaka and the other Kumāras; Brahmā, Rudra and other chief *devatās;* the nine chief *brāhmaṇas*; and the best of the saintly devotees, headed by Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparicara Vasu. Each of these great personalities was worshiping the Lord by chanting sanctified words of praise in their own unique mood. Also in attendance were the Lord's principal internal potencies—Śrī, Puṣṭi, Gīr, Kānti, Kīrti, Tuṣṭi, Ilā and Ūrjā—as were his material potencies Vidyā, Avidyā and Māyā, and his internal pleasure potency, Śakti.

COMMENTARY: Three verses describe his retinue. *Parṣadaiḥ* refers to the most intimate associates, next to him, since they personally served him. Next were the sages such as the Kumāras. Behind were the *devatās* headed by Brahmā. To the right were the nine Prajāpatis: Marīci, Atri, Aṅgirasā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhṛgu, Vaśiṣṭha and Dakṣa. On the left was Nārada. Further away were Prahlāda and the Vasus. These are the *āvaraṇa* forms. In the first circle were Garuḍa and others, being the chief servants (*pramukhaiḥ*). In the second circle were Dhruva, Ambarīṣa and others. The others are clearly described here.

They served with many words or there were many speakers whose hearts were pure. They were all qualified. Or they all were dedicated (*ātmabhiḥ*) to Kṛṣṇa (*amala*—he takes away all obstacles). Since all the words mean Kṛṣṇa, all these meanings are appropriate.

The words expressed different moods. Thus they were not repetitive or useless. Or he was served by all types of *kīrtaṇa* (*vacobhiḥ*) with different *bhāvas*—utterances of Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa. For the *pārṣadas* he was Kṛṣṇa the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, the enjoyer of Ramā. For the Kumāras, he was *parabrahman*. For Brahmā and others, he was the Supreme Lord, attracting everyone by his greatness. For the Prajāpatis, he was dharma personified, generating pious acts like sacrifice. For Prahlāda he was Śyāmasundara. For Nārada he was the best of the Yadus. For the Vasus he was the joy of Gokula. Thus there was excellence in the words. Their very natures were pure (*amalātmabhiḥ*).

The *śaktis* are described as an *āvaraṇa*. Śrī is situated on his chest. She controls all wealth. The others are controllers of various qualities. Puṣṭi nourishes the body. Tuṣṭi nourishes the mind. Gīḥ controls words in general. Īlā controls prayers. Ūrjā is the *śakti* of the senses. There are twelve servants situated in the four directions starting from the east, in groups of three. They constantly serve the Lord with betel-nut, *cāmara* etc.

Texts 39.56–57

vilokya su-bhṛśaṁ prīto bhaktyā paramayā yutaḥ
hṛṣyat-tanūruho bhāva-pariklinnātma-locanaḥ
girā gadgadayāstauṣīt sattvam ālambya sātvataḥ
praṇamya mūrdhnāvahitaḥ kṛtāñjali-puṭaḥ śanaiḥ

As the great devotee Akrūra beheld all this, he became extremely pleased and felt enthused with devotion. His intense ecstasy caused his bodily hairs to stand on end and tears to flow from his eyes, drenching his entire body. Somehow managing to steady himself, Akrūra bowed his head to the ground. Then he joined his palms in supplication and, in a voice choked with emotion, very slowly and attentively began to pray.

COMMENTARY: He was extremely (*subhṛśam*) pleased, since the devotees become joyful when the Lord shows his powers. Or in showing powers to him, the Lord revealed his power to protect the Yadus. He was filled with great respect or intense love (*bhaktyā*). The symptoms of that *bhakti* are described. His hairs stood on end and his eyes and mind became completely damp with *prema* (*bhāva-pariklinnātma-locanaḥ*).

Though by having the highest *bhakti*, *bhāva* will manifest on its own, the description indicates the extreme and continuous nature of the moisture of *prema*. The word *pari* (completely) also indicates this. Controlling himself, he offered respects. If he did not control himself, he could not offer respects or prayers. He concentrated his mind (*avahitaḥ*). He began speaking slowly (*śanaiḥ*) since that was the nature of control or because his voice was choked with tears. He controlled himself and praised the Lord, since he was a devotee or Yadu (*sātvataḥ*). This indicates he was the best of devotees.

Chapter Forty
Akrūra's Prayers

Text 40.1

śrī-akrūra uvāca
nato 'smy ahaṁ tvākhila-hetu-hetuṁ
nārāyaṇaṁ pūruṣam ādyam avyayam
yan-nābhi-jātād aravinda-koṣād
brahmāvirāsīd yata eṣa lokaḥ

Śrī Akrūra said: I bow down to you, the cause of all causes, the original and inexhaustible Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa. From the whorl of the lotus born from your navel, Brahmā appeared, and by his agency this universe has come into being.

COMMENTARY: Having seen the Lord as Nārāyaṇa seated on Ananta, Akrūra first offers respect to him by praising him with a description of his form.

I offer respects to you, the Supreme Lord (*puruṣam*). Brahmā appeared from the lotus of the worlds, which was first in bud form, in his navel. Since Brahmā is a *guṇa avatāra* of the Lord it is suggested that he is eternal. The eternal nature of *avatāras* is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Or Brahmā is the form of all *jīvas*. Thus he is all the planets.

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains it as follows. O Kṛṣṇa! Akrūra recognizes this form as Kṛṣṇa. "You are my uncle. Why do you bow to me?" Thus Akrūra describes him in terms of the Supreme Lord, with four arms. You are the Lord. There cannot be praise just by mentioning his *svarūpa*. The highest praise results from describing his great excellence, distinguishing him from others.

You are the cause of all causes of the world. You are the shelter of all *jīvas* (*nārāyaṇam*). You are first (*ādyam*), since you exist in the beginning, or since you are the best. You are the lord (*puruṣam*). As a pot arises from clay, everything arises from you. You have no decrease (*avyayam*). You are the one cause of all causes. From your navel springs a lotus, which is the fourteen worlds, or which produces the moving and nonmoving beings.

Since the lotus comes from you, the lake from which it springs does not decrease.

Text 40.2

bhūs toyam agniḥ pavanaṁ kham ādir
mahān ajādir mana indriyāṇi
sarvendriyārthā vibudhāś ca sarve
ye hetavas te jagato ’ṅga-bhūtāḥ

Earth; water; fire; air; ether and its source, ahaṅkāra; the *mahat-tattva*, the total material nature and the *jīva*; the mind; the senses; the sense objects; and the senses’ presiding deities—all these causes of the cosmic manifestation are born from your body.

COMMENTARY: *Ādiḥ* refers to *ahaṅkāra*, since ether’s origin (*ādi*) is *ahaṅkāra.* Similarly, before *māyā* (*ajā)* there is the pure *jīva* (*ādi).* Thus *ahaṅkāra, mahat-tattva, prakṛti* and *jīva* are four. *Buddhi*, and *citta* are included in *manas.* There are ten senses and five objects of the senses. Thus there are twenty-five in all. *Vibudha* refers to the *devatās* of the senses starting with the *dik-devatās* including Vāyu, and then Candra (*manas*), Brahmā (*buddhi*), Rudra (*ahaṅkāra*) and Viṣṇu (*citta*). Thus there are fourteen *devatās.* There are other causes of the universe: time, karma, *svabhāva* and their *devatās* as well.

Or “There are many other causes.” Yes, but these arise from you. Then the list is given.

They arise as *vibhūtis* of the Lord (*aṅga-bhūtāḥ*). Or O lord (*aṅga*)! They arise (*bhūtāḥ*) from you (*te*).

Text 40.3

naite svarūpaṁ vidur ātmanas te
hy ajādayo ’nātmatayā gṛhītaḥ
ajo ’nubaddhaḥ sa guṇair ajāyā
guṇāt paraṁ veda na te svarūpam

The total material nature and these other elements of creation certainly cannot know you as you are, for they are manifested in the realm of dull

matter. Since you are beyond the modes of nature, even Brahmā, who is bound up in these modes, does not know your true identity.

COMMENTARY: All these with *prakṛti* as their origin (*ajādayaḥ*) do not know you. And though conscious, the *jīva*, does not know you. Or even Brahmā, constantly bound (*anubaddhaḥ*), does not know you.

Or "Describing Nārāyaṇa, you praise me. Why do you not describe my two-handed form, the joy of Gokula?" The great devotees who are beyond the *guṇas* know your two-handed form, the joy of Gokula, most attractive, and not others. That is explained in this verse.

Materially conscious *jīvas* (*ajadayaḥ*) do not know that form of yours, though it is directly present (*ātmanaḥ*). Only the people of Vraja know that form. "Does this hope not arise in anyone else?" By similar *bhakti*, someone, sometime, can know that form. Brahmā (*ajaḥ*) knows this. Going to Vṛndāvana, though bound by the *guṇas*, offering respect to you (*nate*), he knows your (*te*) form. That is described in SB 10.14.1.

Text 40.4

tvāṁ yogino yajanty addhā mahā-puruṣam īśvaram
sādhyātmaṁ sādhibhūtaṁ ca sādhidaivaṁ ca sādhavaḥ

Pure yogīs worship you, the Supreme lord, by conceiving of you in the threefold form comprising the living entities, the material elements that constitute the living entities' bodies, and the controlling deities of those elements.

COMMENTARY: The *yogīs* worship you directly (*addhā*) as the *mahā-puruṣa*. Because of this, they are devotees (*sādhavaḥ*).

Text 40.5

trayyā ca vidyayā kecit tvāṁ vai vaitānikā dvijāḥ
yajante vitatair yajñair nānā-rūpāmarākhyayā

Dvijas who follow the regulations concerning the three sacred fires worship you by chanting mantras from the three Vedas and performing elaborate fire sacrifices for the various *devatās*, who have many forms and names.

COMMENTARY: Because they are qualified for the three Vedas, the *brāhmaṇas* worship you with many types of sacrifices.

Text 40.6

eke tvākhila-karmāṇi sannyasyopaśamaṁ gatāḥ
jñānino jñāna-yajñena yajanti jñāna-vigraham

Jñānīs renounce all material activities and, having thus become peaceful, perform the sacrifice of jñāna to worship you, the original form of all knowledge.

COMMENTARY: Becoming steady in mind, they become absorbed in *samāḍhi* and worship you in the form of pure consciousness. They are renunciates, knowers of *adhyātmā,* since they worship *ātmā*.

Text 40.7

anye ca saṁskṛtātmāno vidhināabhihitena te
yajanti tvan-mayās tvāṁ vai bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam

And yet others—those whose intelligence is pure—follow the injunctions of Vaiṣṇava scriptures promulgated by you. Absorbing their minds in the thought of you, they worship you as the one Supreme Lord manifesting in multiple forms.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *ca* indicates the previous methods were all similar. They worship you by the process described by you. This statement shows the great authority of Pañcarātra and that it is respected by all. This will also be shown by statements from *Mokṣa-dharma.* These people have hearts endowed with excellent qualities (*saṁskṛtātmānaḥ*), disregarding initiation into worship of Śiva or others. They are absorbed in you (*tvan-mayāḥ*). They worship you, seeing you internally and externally in many forms such as Vāsudeva and Matsya, which are forms of the one Mahā-nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha. Or, though there are many forms, they are actually one.

Text 40.8

tvām evānye śivoktena mārgeṇa śiva-rūpiṇam
bahv-ācārya-vibhedena bhagavantam upāsate

There are still others, who worship you, the Supreme Lord, in the form of Śiva. They follow the path described by him and interpreted in various ways by many teachers.

COMMENTARY: The word *eva* indicates that Śiva is considered non-different from the Lord. Thus he is called the Lord (*bhagavantam*).

Text 40.9

sarva eva yajanti tvāṁ sarva-deva-mayeśvaram
ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yady apy anya-dhiyaḥ prabho

But all these people, my Lord, even those who have turned their attention away from you and are worshiping other deities, are actually worshiping you alone, the embodiment of all the *devatās.*

COMMENTARY: These persons who worship insignificant *devatās* actually worship you. The reason is given. O you are all the *devatās* (*sarva-deva-maya*). You are the Lord (*īśvaram*), the master of all *devatās.* When the servant serves the master, service is accomplished. Or they worship you, the Lord, who is all *devatās.* You are different from Brahmā and others. Though he may be their controller, he is not all the *devatās.* O master (*prabho*)! You are endowed with all powers.

Six types of worship have been described. Among them, first there are three types: *yoga*, *karma* and *jñāna*. According to *dīkṣa* there are three types: *vaiṣṇava, śaiva* and *kṣaudras* (minor *devatās*).

Or many *jīvas* worship you in different forms, since they do not know your own form. That is described in five verses (4-8). But by your power, even their worship ends in *bhakti* to you. That is described in the present verse. There are worshippers of various *devatās* (*bhaktāḥ*). Or what should be said? The different types of worship end in the worship of you. Even the worship of insignificant *devatās* ends in you.

Text 40.10

yathādri-prabhavā nadyaḥ parjanyāpūritāḥ prabho
viśanti sarvataḥ sindhuṁ tadvat tvāṁ gatayo 'ntataḥ

As rivers born from the mountains and filled by the rain flow from all sides into the sea, so do all deliberations from the Vedas with commentaries by sages in the end reach you, O master.

COMMENTARY: The river arises from a mountain. If there are many mountains, there are many rivers. And by being filled with rain, there will be many rivers. Each will be full. From all directions, they all enter into one ocean. O Lord, spread everywhere (*vibho*)! Every goal should enter you ultimately. Some are direct and some are indirect. The worship ends in you because it belongs to you.

Text 40.11

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti bhavataḥ prakṛter guṇāḥ
teṣu hi prākṛtāḥ protā ā-brahma-sthāvarādayaḥ

Goodness, passion and ignorance, the qualities of your material nature, entangle all conditioned living beings, from Brahmā down to the nonmoving creatures.

COMMENTARY: The order of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* follows the order of the worshippers mentioned. Or the order is according to *devatās*, humans and animals mentioned later. All beings are strung in the *guṇas* (*teṣu*) because they are related to *prakṛti* (*prākṛtāḥ*).

Though the Lord becomes Brahmā for creation, and becomes visible, being an *avatāra* of the Lord according to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, this statement is for the unrefined. According to *Skanda Purāṇa*, in some *mahā-kalpas* a *jīva* becomes Brahmā.

Or "Why do they not serve me directly?" They are bewildered by your *māyā*. From highest to lowest they are all bewildered.

Text 40.12

tubhyaṁ namas te tv aviṣakta-dṛṣṭaye
sarvātmane sarva-dhiyāṁ ca sākṣiṇe
guṇa-pravāho 'yam avidyayā kṛtaḥ
pravartate deva-nṛ-tiryag-ātmasu

I offer my obeisances to you, who, as the Supreme Soul of all beings, witness everyone's consciousness with unbiased vision. The force of your

material modes, produced by the force of ignorance, flows strongly among the living beings who assume identities as *devatās,* humans and animals.

COMMENTARY: *Te* should be linked to *avidyayā* (by your energy of ignorance) in the third line. The force of the *guṇas* created by your (*te*) ignorance acts upon the living beings. Instead of *tubhyam* sometimes *tasmai* is found. The word *tu* indicates a new subject, the Lord, completely different from matter.

Another version has *astu*, indicating steadiness in offering respects. You are all *ātmās* (*sarvātmane*). The *ātmās*, as your *aṁśas,* are non-different from you. Or you are the giver of consciousness to all beings. Thus you are by nature different from the *jīvas*. The distinction is then made clear. *Saṁsāra* is experienced by all *jīvas*. It repeats again and again (*pravartate*).

Or "Why should I be worshipped and not someone else?" Akrūra then describes the Lord and offers respect. You are not too concerned about the devotees' offenses (*aviṣakta-dṛṣṭaye*). You forgive even many offenses. You are Paramātmā (*sarvātmane*). This indicates that he is the dearest and the Supreme Lord. You are the witness of all intelligence. You know if someone has somehow thought of you. This indicates the Lord's gratitude and his value in being served.

Others, because of not knowing you, continually suffer and are not qualified for worshipping you. *Saṁsāra* affects them all. All *devatās* except Brahmā and Śiva are affected. Brahmā and Śiva are devotees. Or the flow of your qualities like mercy affect *devatās* and others, even though they are in ignorance. The main cause of worshipping you is your mercy.

Texts 40.13–14

agnir mukhaṁ te 'vanir aṅghrir īkṣaṇaṁ
sūryo nabho nābhir atho diśaḥ śrutiḥ
dyauḥ kaṁ surendrās tava bāhavo 'rṇavāḥ
kukṣir marut prāṇa-balaṁ prakalpitam
romāṇi vṛkṣauṣadhayaḥ śiroruhā
meghāḥ parasyāsthi-nakhāni te 'drayaḥ

nimeṣaṇaṁ rātry-ahanī prajāpatir
meḍhras tu vṛṣṭis tava vīryam iṣyate

Fire is said to be your mouth, the earth your feet, the sun your eye, and the sky your navel. The directions are your ear, the chief demigods your arms, and the oceans your abdomen. Heaven is considered to be your head and the wind your vital air and physical strength. The trees and plants are the hairs on your body, the clouds the hair on your head, and the mountains your bones and nails. The passage of day and night is the blinking of your eyes, the progenitor of mankind your genitals and the rain your semen.

COMMENTARY: Two verses now explain that he is the Lord of everything, since he is everything (*sarva-maya*). Though it is said that fire comes from the Lord's mouth, and thus difference is perceived, it is also said that fire is his mouth. The cause and effect are seen as non-different. In this way the Lord is all *devatās.* It is said they are considered in this way (*kalpitam*). Though sky (*nabhas*) and other items are not famous as *devatās,* by imagining them as limbs of the Lord, the Lord's position as the ultimate controller is made clear.

How is this possible? It is because you are the Supreme Lord (*parasya*) or you are different from all of them by your own form. The difference from them is shown along with non-difference.

Text 40.15

tvayy avyayātman puruṣe prakalpitā
lokāḥ sa-pālā bahu-jīva-saṅkulāḥ
yathā jale sañjihate jalaukaso
'py udumbare vā maśakā mano-maye

All the worlds, with their presiding *devatās* and teeming populations, originate in you, the inexhaustible Supreme Lord. These worlds travel within you, the basis of the mind and senses, just as aquatics swim in the sea or tiny insects burrow within an *udumbara* fruit.

COMMENTARY: *Manomaye* means "in you who can be conceived by the mind." The verse explains that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord in contrast to the *devatās* just described. O Lord whose nature is indestructibility (*avyayātman*)! You

are undiminished like the ocean where the fish swim. All the fourteen worlds with Brahmā and others are in you, the complete *puruṣa*. Or the world spread with many *jīvas* has been created by you, or by your *māyā*, and they wander about (*jihate*) freely (*saṁ*) within you.

"All fish do not wander about freely in all water." To erase this doubt, another example is given. Insects burrow in a fruit freely. You appear in the mind just by thinking of you. This shows how the Lord is easily served. Or by your inconceivable power, everything is even within your mental form, what to speak of your actual form.

Text 40.16

yāni yānīha rūpāṇi krīḍanārthaṁ bibharṣi hi
tair āmṛṣṭa-śuco lokā mudā gāyanti te yaśaḥ

To enjoy your pastimes, you manifest yourself in various forms in this material world, and these incarnations cleanse away all the unhappiness of those who joyfully chant your glories.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

It is difficult to realize you in your true form. Though knowledge brings intense bliss, we do not see that happiness. Great bliss arises and all lamentation ceases for everyone from seeing the pastimes of your *avatāras* and from hearing about them. Thus the devotees sing about those pastimes.

jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vāṅ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām

Those who, giving up attempts to understand your powers and living constantly in devotional association, who pass their lives respecting topics about you and your associates with the ear, by body, mind and words, which they proclaim loudly, bring you under control through you cannot be controlled by anyone in the three worlds. SB 10.14.3

Repetition of *yāni* indicates that all these forms are worthy of worship since they remove lamentation and bestow bliss. "You sustain (*bibharti*) these many forms" indicates that these are all expansions from Kṛṣṇa. All people (*lokāḥ*) chant these pastimes. There is no qualification necessary. They chant in joy (*mudā*), since this singing is the highest human goal. Or this verse indicates that the Lord is worshipped by the Vaiṣṇavas, though this was previously mentioned with other types of ordinary worship. Verse 7 mentioned that the one Lord was worshipped in many forms (*bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*). Since Akrūra never mentioned those forms at that time, being unsatisfied now, he mentions them.

Texts 40.17–18

namaḥ kāraṇa-matsyāya pralayābdhi-carāya ca
hayaśīrṣṇe namas tubhyaṁ madhu-kaiṭabha-mṛtyave
akūpārāya bṛhate namo mandara-dhāriṇe
kṣity-uddhāra-vihārāya namaḥ śūkara-mūrtaye

I offer my obeisances to you, the cause of the creation, Matsya, who swam about in the ocean of dissolution, to Hayagrīva, the killer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, to the immense Kūrma, who supported Mandara Mountain, and to the boar incarnation Varāha, who enjoyed lifting the earth.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I offer my respects to Matsya, who is the cause of everything (*namaḥ kāraṇa-matsyāya*). This indicates that the form of Matsya is eternal. The form has been a cause previously also. The word *ca* indicates that as well as swimming in the water of dissolution, Matsya gave instructions to Satyavrata. The word *ca* should be understood with the other *avatāras* as well. All the *avatāras* should also be related with *tubhyam* (you). All of these forms are also you. *Akūpāra* means the ocean and the king of turtles. Kūrma is described as huge since he was over a hundred thousand *yojanas* in breadth. You have a form which is similar to that of a boar. This is not a material boar. Since the Lord has a spiritual form it should be defined in this way.

Text 40.19

namas te 'dbhuta-siṁhāya sādhu-loka-bhayāpaha
vāmanāya namas tubhyaṁ krānta-tribhuvanāya ca

Obeisances to you, the amazing lion Nṛsiṁha, who remove your saintly devotees' fear, and to the dwarf Vāmana, who stepped over the three worlds.

COMMENTARY: He is astonishing because he is half man and half lion. He destroys fears of all persons of proper conduct. He also destroys the opposite types of people (*ca*). Instead of *bhayāpaha* sometimes *abhayāya* is seen. I offer respects to Vāmana who stepped over the three worlds. He also gave mercy to Bali (*ca*).

Text 40.20

namo bhṛguṇāṁ pataye dṛpta-kṣatra-vana-cchide
namas te raghu-varyāya rāvaṇānta-karāya ca

Obeisances to you, lord of the Bhṛgus, who cut down the forest of the conceited royal order, and to Rāma, the best of the Raghu dynasty, who put an end to the demon Rāvaṇa.

COMMENTARY: Parāśurāma was born in Bhṛgu's dynasty. He cut down the forest which was too dense with *kṣatriyas* who were out of control, harassing the *brāhmaṇas* because of pride. Many times, he killed all the *kṣatriyas*, using his axe. Rāma killed Rāvaṇa and his followers like Kumbakarṇa, and also showed correct dharma.

Text 40.21

namas te vāsudevāya namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca
pradyumnāyaniruddhāya sātvatāṁ pataye namaḥ

Obeisances to you and to your forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, protectors of the Sātvatas.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa has been described, but Balarāma has not. He is included among the *avatāras* and thus offered respects in describing the *catur-vyūha* in this verse. Saṅkarṣaṇa means Balarāma. They are non-different. This is mentioned in *Bhāgavatam*. Or instead of the *catur-vyūha*,

after offering respect to Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's future son Pradyumna and his grandson Aniruddha are offered respects. I offer respects (*namaḥ*) to Balarāma (*saṅkarṣaṇāya*), who is the son of Vasudeva (*vāsudevāya*), and to Kṛṣṇa's son (*namaḥ*) and grandson (*namaḥ*). The second *namaḥ* is for Pradyumna and the third one is for Aniruddha. Or out of devotion for him as the elder brother, *namaḥ* is repeated for Balarāma.

The goal of the three is described: they are protectors of the Yadus or the devotees (*sātvatām pataye*). They appear in those forms to give happiness to the Yadus by their pastimes. *Mad-bhaktānāṁ vinodārtaṁ karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ*: for the pleasure of my devotees I perform various actions. (*Padma Purāṇa*)

Text 40.22

namo buddhāya śuddhāya daitya-dānava-mohine
mleccha-prāya-kṣatra-hantre namas te kalki-rūpiṇe

Obeisances to your form as the faultless Buddha, who will bewilder the Daityas and Dānavas, and to Kalki, the annihilator of the meat-eaters posing as kings.

COMMENTARY: Though Buddha propagated scriptures contrary to the Vedas, he was pure *(śuddhāya*). Or he was most pure because he preached non-violence. Daityas were the sons of Diti. The Dānavas were sons of Danu. Buddha bewildered them, since he inspired them to follow dharmas contrary to Vedic sacrifices. That was his goal. Kalki will kill the *kṣatriyas* who are mostly the lowest outcastes. Kalki has the form (*rūpine*) or dress of an outcaste (*kalki*), since at the end of Kali-yuga *brāhmaṇas* and others have the form of outcastes. He is empowered to begin Satya-yuga by destroying sin and the sinful people. In this way, the forms and pastimes of each *avatāra* have been described. Though there are many other *avatāras* such as Kapila and Ṛṣabha, these only have been described since they are the famous ones, being the principal ones.

Text 40.23

bhagavan jīva-loko 'yaṁ mohitas tava māyayā
ahaṁ mamety asad-grāho bhrāmyate karma-vartmasu

O Supreme Lord, the living entities in this world are bewildered by your illusory energy. Becoming involved in the false concepts of "I" and "my," they are forced to wander along the paths of karma.

COMMENTARY: Though you appear as various *avatāras* to deliver the world, people having the influence of great offenses reject *bhakti* to you, being bewildered by your *māyā,* and take to other paths. Akrūra laments that in this verse. O merciful Lord (*bhagavān*)! You produce mercy. Or Lord with pastimes difficult to understand (*bhagavān*)! Though you are eager to deliver everyone by your form and pastimes, all *jīvas* (*jīva-lokaḥ*) are bewildered because you spread *māyā* to bewilder them. This is illustrated. They insist on thinking (*grahaḥ*) of their bodies as their self and their sons as their possessions because of lack of intelligence (*asat*) or because they are opposed to renunciation which is favorable to *bhakti*. They continually indulge in the path of *karma*, not *bhakti* to you.

Text 40.24

ahaṁ cātmātmajāgāra- dārārtha-svajanādiṣu
bhramāmi svapna-kalpeṣu mūḍhaḥ satya-dhiyā vibho

I too am deluded in this way, O almighty Lord, foolishly thinking my body, children, home, wife, money and followers to be real, though they are actually as unreal as a dream.

COMMENTARY: Though I have taken to *bhakti* to you, because the fault of associating with offenders, becoming weak, I have become covered by *māyā* and cannot give up attachment to house and family. The word *ca* means "even." Because of being covered by *māyā*, I am deluded, thinking these things are real (*satya-dhiyā*), though they are like objects in a dream. Repeatedly, I am attached to them or become bewildered *(bhramāmi*) since I am a fool, without discrimination. I think of my body (*ātmā*) and relatives and friends (*svajana*) as well as servants and maids, animals and land (*ādiṣu*). That is to be expected since you pervade the world with *māyā* (*vibho*).

Text 40.25

anityānātma-duḥkheṣu viparyaya-matir hy aham
dvandvārāmas tamo-viṣṭo na jāne tvātmanaḥ priyam

Thus mistaking the temporary for the eternal, my body for the self, and sources of misery for sources of happiness, I have tried to take pleasure in material dualities. Covered in this way by ignorance, I could not recognize you as the real object of my love.

COMMENTARY: With mistaken intelligence for certain (*hi*), I have enjoyed dualities and not recognized that you (*tvā*) are affectionate to me (and not my sons, etc.), since you are Paramātmā. You should be known since you are more affectionate than family members. But I have not realized you.

Or because of this, there are great obstacles. The three phrases show causes: my intelligence is reversed, I take pleasure in dualities and am covered by ignorance. I do not know you, who are dearer than myself. Otherwise, I would not be attached to my body and possessions.

Text 40.26

yathābudho jalaṁ hitvā praticchannaṁ tad-udbhavaiḥ
abhyeti mṛga-tṛṣṇāṁ vai tadvat tvāhaṁ parāṅ-mukhaḥ

Just as a fool overlooks a body of water covered by the vegetation growing in it and chases a mirage, so I have turned away from you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The person with no discriminating power gives up water covered by vegetation, even though it is easy to discover, and goes far off seeking a mirage. *Vai* means this is well known. Similarly I have given up you (*tvā*), even though you are full of powers and sweetness.

Text 40.27

notsahe 'haṁ kṛpaṇa-dhīḥ kāma-karma-hataṁ manaḥ
roddhuṁ pramāthibhiś cākṣair hriyamāṇam itas tataḥ

My intelligence is so crippled that I cannot find the strength to curb my mind, which is disturbed by material desires and activities and constantly dragged here and there by my obstinate senses.

COMMENTARY: Though I am your devotee, I am in a fallen condition. Or though I know all this, I am in this condition. *Kāma* is the desire for enjoyment. Karma is its cause. My mind struggling with desire and karma, is pulled everywhere for sense objects (*itas tataḥ*).

Text 40.28

so 'haṁ tavāṅghry-upagato 'smy asatāṁ durāpaṁ
tac cāpy ahaṁ bhavad-anugraha īśa manye
puṁso bhaved yarhi saṁsaraṇāpavargas
tvayy abja-nābha sad-upāsanayā matiḥ syāt

Being thus fallen, I am approaching your feet for shelter, O Lord, because although the impure can never attain your feet, I think it is nevertheless possible by your mercy. Only when one's material life has ceased by serving your pure devotees, O lotus-naveled Lord, one develops *bhakti* to you.

COMMENTARY: Akrūra uses the word *asmī* (I am) to indicate his conviction in surrender to Kṛṣṇa and its eternal nature. You cannot be attained by those who have uncontrolled senses (*asatām*). O Lord (*īśa*), being thus fallen, I am approaching your feet for shelter. O Lord, although the impure can never attain your feet, I think it is nevertheless possible by your mercy. Only when one's material life has ceased by serving your pure devotees, O lotus-naveled Lord, one develops *bhakti* to you.

As *antaryāmī* you can help me attain you now. You are merciful because you are merciful to all beings, giving the worlds a residence in your navel (*abjanābha*). He gives the example of Nārāyaṇa, using Ananta as his seat.

Or his mercy is described, since he is the cause of destroying *saṁsāra*. He manifests the material world to benefit the *jīvas*, with the lotus consisting of the worlds, which is the birthplace of Brahmā, the creator. The word *bhavat* indicates reverence for his mercy and Akrūra's excellent *bhakti*. The phrase may be taken as *bhavad-anugrahe* or *bhavad-anugrahaḥ*.

He expresses a desire for liberation. He became detached from his house on experiencing suffering in association with Kaṁsa or because of offending the *gopīs*. Or he desires to teach the world about avoiding

offenses to the great devotees. Or afflicted by suffering in *saṁsāra*, I approach your lotus feet to destroy that suffering.

O independent Lord! One cannot search out a reason for your mercy. "You desire liberation. Why not desire love for me?" When a person becomes free of *saṁsāra*, by service (sevayā) to your devotees, he can think of you. The inclination of the mind (*matiḥ*) is the cause of *prema*. Or the cause of *prema* is knowledge of the greatness of *bhakti*.

Or I cannot control my mind. To control it, I approach your lotus feet. "Why do you approach my feet to control your mind? Why not absorb your mind in me?" Men must first destroy *saṁsāra*. Suffering from *saṁsāra*, I am not now qualified to ask for that. Or attaining your mercy, I think that men, freed from *saṁsāra*, can concentrate on you by the worship of your devotees. Now lacking your mercy, I cannot pray for that.

Or "Having praised what you have seen as Nārāyaṇa and surrendered to him, why do you not praise the Lord as my two-handed form which gives joy in Gokula?" When a person has destroyed *saṁsāra*, by worshipping Nārāyaṇa with the lotus navel, one can then concentrate on you, the joy of Gokula. Though you are difficult to approach for fallen persons like me, it is possible by the mercy of you, the son of Nanda. It is not possible otherwise. By worship of Nārāyaṇa, one can concentrate on you. That is the correct worship. This cannot happen without your mercy. This indicates the difficult of attaining Kṛṣṇa. Other methods will not produce this result.

Without your mercy how can I, like Brahmā, praise you with descriptions of your form?

Text 40.29

namo vijñāna-mātrāya sarva-pratyaya-hetave
puruṣeśa-pradhānāya brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye

Obeisances to the Brahman, the possessor of unlimited energies, the embodiment of pure knowledge, the source of all kinds of awareness, and the controller of karma of the j*īvas.*

COMMENTARY: You know all of this by your nature. What can I tell you? Concluding the praise and offering himself, he offers respects in two verses (29-30). I offer respects to you, the form of concentrated knowledge, to the

controller of karma and time which give suffering to the *jīvas* (*puruṣa*) or to the controller in the form of the three *puruṣas.* Since you are the Supreme Lord, you have all knowledge.

Text 40.30

namas te vāsudevāya sarva-bhūta-kṣayāya ca
hṛṣīkeśa namas tubhyaṁ prapannaṁ pāhi māṁ prabho

O son of Vasudeva, obeisances to you, within whom all living beings reside. O Lord of the mind and senses, again I offer you my obeisances. O master, please protect me, who am surrendered unto you.

COMMENTARY: As the presiding deity of *citta*, Vāsudeva, you inspire all consciousness. Thus you should inspire me to complete the praise. You should not say that you cannot protect me from the *saṁsāra* of household life and attachment to sense objects or from the agitation of the mind. You are fully capable (*prabho*). As a Yadu, I am more qualified for mercy than Brahmā. Like Brahmā, I have praised you by glorifying the people of Vraja. Please protect me, since my *bhakti* has decreased by the offense to the *gopīs*. Or he addresses him in this way out of fear, on remembering the separation and consequent pain experienced by the Lord who is controlled by his devotee's love.

I offer respects continually to the Lord Caitanya-deva, who has made a fool dance and caused laughter for the intelligent (by my comments).

Chapter Forty-one
Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Enter Mathurā

Text 41.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
stuvatas tasya bhagavān darśayitvā jale vapuḥ
bhūyaḥ samāharat kṛṣṇo naṭo nāṭyam ivātmanaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While Akrūra was still offering prayers, the Kṛṣṇa withdrew his form that he had revealed in the water, just as an actor winds up his performance.

COMMENTARY: As Akrūra offered prayers, Kṛṣṇa then (*bhuyaḥ*) made the form disappear. The genitive case indicates disinterest on the part of Kṛṣṇa. Or he showed the form in the water elaborately (*bhuyaḥ*), since he was Bhagavān, full of all powers. This was one of his powers. He withdrew the form since he was fond of fun (*kṛṣṇaḥ*) or was attracted to his devotee by his affection. Otherwise he could not accomplish bliss in the devotee realizing his sweetness. He showed and withdrew the form by himself, easily (*ātmanaḥ*). The form was non-different from himself. He was like an actor who shows many forms. This indicates that the form shown was not his only form. It arose from Kṛṣṇa

Text 41.2

so 'pi cāntarhitaṁ vīkṣya jalād unmajya satvaraḥ
kṛtvā cāvaśyakaṁ sarvaṁ vismito ratham āgamat

When Akrūra saw the vision disappear, he came out of the water and quickly finished his various ritual duties. He then returned to the chariot, astonished.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Api ca indicates all that he had previously seen. Seeing that it had all disappeared, he came out of the water and completed his midday rites such as worship of the Lord using water, etc. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *arcayām āsa sarveśaṁ dhūpa-puṣpa-manomayaiḥ:* he worshipped the Lord

mentally with incense and flowers. This means he offered water to represent the various offerings.

Text 41.3

tam apṛcchad dhṛṣīkeśaḥ kiṁ te dṛṣṭam ivādbhutam
bhūmau viyati toye vā tathā tvāṁ lakṣayāmahe

Kṛṣṇa asked Akrūra: Have you seen something wonderful on the earth, in the sky or in the water? From your appearance, we think you have.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa, who inspires the senses or is omniscient (*hṛṣīkeśaḥ*), spoke out of curiosity. What did you experience at this holy place? It looks like you have seen something astonishing. It can be inferred from your appearance, such as your wide eyes.

nūnaṁ te dṛṣṭam āścaryam akrūra yamunājale
vismayotphulla-nayano bhavān saṁ lakṣyate yataḥ

O Akrūra! You must have seen something astonishing in the water of the Yamunā since you have wide eyes. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa.*

He spoke in the plural to indicate that his elder brother also had noticed this.

Text 41.4

śrī-akrūra uvāca
adbhutānīha yāvanti bhūmau viyati vā jale
tvayi viśvātmake tāni kiṁ me 'dṛṣṭaṁ vipaśyataḥ

Akrūra said: Whatever wonderful things the earth, sky or water contain, all exist in you. Since you encompass everything, when I am seeing you, what have I not seen?

COMMENTARY: *Iha* means "in the world." The cause of astonishing things is you, the form of the universe (*viśvātmake*). As I directly saw (*vipaśyataḥ*) you, what have I not seen?

Text 41.5

yatrādbhutāni sarvāṇi bhūmau viyati vā jale
taṁ tvānupaśyato brahman kiṁ me dṛṣṭam ihādbhutam

And now that I am seeing you, O Supreme Absolute Truth, in whom reside all amazing things on the earth, in the sky and in the water, what amazing things could I see in this world?

COMMENTARY: Seeing you, certainly (*nu*) what is more amazing to see in this world? Or seeing you again and again (*anu*), what is amazing? The reference to amazing things is in the previous verse. What was seen on land, etc., was previously unseen. But it is seen here. This is according to Citsukha's explanation. Śrīdhara Svāmī agrees with it. Another version has *apaśyataḥ*: I saw previously. *Tam tvām iha paśyataḥ* is also seen. This is acceptable. What was astonishing was also seen by you. Or what was astonishing was shown by you. Now, like a fool, I ask about it. You are most astonishing.

Text 41.6

ity uktvā codayām āsa syandanaṁ gāndinī-sutaḥ
mathurām anayad rāmaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ caiva dinātyaye

With these words, Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, began driving the chariot onward. At the end of the day he arrived in Mathurā with Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Gāndinī came out of the womb only when a cow was donated to a *brāhmaṇa* every day. By mentioning her name, it is suggested that Akrūra, her son, had similar piety. He brought the boys to Mathurā. Mathurā means *mantha viloḍane* or churning. Thus the boys' hearts were excited by the city. Though separated from the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa would perform pastimes in Mathurā. They arrived during the last part of the day. Verse 19 mentions afternoon. They also performed many pastimes before dark. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *saṁprāptaś cāpi sāyāhne so 'krūro mathurāṁ purīm:* Akrūra reached Mathurā in the evening. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *viviśus te purīm ramyāṁ kāle rakta-divākaraḥ*: they entered the attractive city when the sun turned red. These descriptions are from another *kalpa*. It also is said in SB 10.42.23 that the two wandered about the city and then the sun set.

Text 41.7

mārge grāma-janā rājaṁs tatra tatropasaṅgatāḥ
vasudeva-sutau vīkṣya prītā dṛṣṭiṁ na cādaduḥ

Wherever they passed along the road, O King, the village people came forward and looked upon the two sons of Vasudeva with great pleasure. In fact, the villagers could not withdraw their eyes from them.

COMMENTARY: Moreover, they proceeded slowly because they wanted to give pleasure to the people on the road. The village people were simple but, by their nature, they were attracted (*prītāḥ*) to the two boys. O King! You can understand their nature. Or remembering those people's affection for Kṛṣṇa, he calls out to the king when pain arose from his *prema.* At that time, the people gathered on the road to see the sons of Vasudeva (*vasudeva-sutau*). At this time, they became aware of Kṛṣṇa's birth. Or they watched because of the great beauty, since Kṛṣṇa revealed qualities of Bhagavān, though he was Vasudeva's son. Or Vasudeva means the best of Vasus, Nanda.

Text 41.8

tāvad vrajaukasas tatra nanda-gopādayo 'grataḥ
puropavanam āsādya pratīkṣanto 'vatasthire

Nanda Mahārāja and the other residents of Vṛndāvana, having reached Mathurā ahead of the chariot, had stopped at a garden on the outskirts of the city to wait for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Nanda and others waited until Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma arrived. They stared at the road from a high vantage point, since close friends worry about the safety of friends. They did not enter the city without them. Previously they could not follow the chariot because it went more quickly. Though they did not see the marks of the chariot wheels there, they went on the straight road, but suspected that he had gone on an indirect road, from seeing the marks. They thought that by going on the straight road they would quickly meet them. When the roads joined near the city and they did not see them, they remained gazing at the road with great longing.

Text 41.9

tān sametyāha bhagavān akrūraṁ jagad-īśvaraḥ
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ praśritaṁ prahasann iva

After joining Nanda and the others, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the controller of the universe, took humble Akrūra's hand in his own and, smiling, spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: He met with Nanda. It was proper to give up others and join with his friends in order to experience happiness in his pastimes. Though he was Lord of the universe, Kṛṣṇa took Akrūra's hands in his own, because he was displaying his unlimited qualities (*bhagavān*) such as being affectionate to his devotees. He appeared to smile. This was natural. He had no deception. Or *iva* indicates it was a slight smile, since he was pained by separation from the *gopīs*.

Text 41.10

bhavān praviśatām agre saha-yānaḥ purīṁ gṛham
vayaṁ tv ihāvamucyātha tato drakṣyāmahe purīm

[Kṛṣṇa said:] Take the chariot and enter the city ahead of us. Then go home. After resting here for a while, we will go to see the city.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After you enter the city, we will see the city. Kṛṣṇa addresses him as *tata* to show respect. Since we want to rest and then see the city we will be delayed. Therefore it is not possible for us to enter with you. They wanted to see the city in a leisurely way.

Text 41.11

śrī-akrūra uvāca
nāhaṁ bhavadbhyāṁ rahitaḥ pravekṣye mathurāṁ prabho
tyaktuṁ nārhasi māṁ nātha bhaktaṁ te bhakta-vatsala

Akrūra said: O master, without the two of you I shall not enter Mathurā. I am your devotee, O Lord, so it is not fair for you to abandon me, since you are always affectionate to your devotees.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because of great pain, he calls out to Kṛṣṇa many times with "O Lord! O giver! O Kṛṣṇa, affection to your devotees!" I cannot enter the city without you because you give shelter to all beings, since you are most powerful (*prabho*)! "Enter with my permission." I cannot leave you, since you give a person whatever he desires (*nātha*). "But detached, neutral persons can be given up." I am your devotee (*te bhaktam*), surrendered completely to you. "I cannot give you up, but for a short time you should go to your house in the city for relaxing." It is not proper for you to give up your devotee for even a moment, since you are most affection to them (*bhakta-vatsala*).

Text 41.12

āgaccha yāma gehān naḥ sa-nāthān kurv adhokṣaja
sahāgrajaḥ sa-gopālaiḥ suhṛdbhiś ca suhṛttama

Come, let us go to my house with your elder brother, the cowherd men and your companions. O best of friends, O transcendental Lord, in this way please grace my house with its master.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"What should I do?" Come to my house. "You should go to Kaṁsa in order to tell him that we have arrived." Fearing such an answer from Kṛṣṇa, he shows fearlessness because of experiencing Kṛṣṇa's powers in the Yamunā. I will not go there. Come to my house. You two, the others and I will first go to our residences. But not receiving Kṛṣṇa's consent, he then prays with humility. Do this for us, who are protected by you (*sanāthān*). He speaks in the plural (*naḥ*) to indicate his friends as well. You are beyond the knowledge of the senses but you will prove your protective qualities (*sanātha*) by coming to my house personally. Or go to our (*naḥ*) houses and give the residents protection (*sanāthān*). Since the houses are without masters, by going to them your quality of giving protection will be shown. Do not come alone but come with your brother and the cowherds. Or come with your friends who protect the carts and oxen. This meaning can be derived according to the rule: *tṛtīyāsaptamyor bahula.* (*Pāṇini* 2.4.84)

“Why do we have to go immediately?” Those who show unconditional mercy are friends. Devotees are even better friends. Bhagavān is the best friend (*suhṛttama*).

Text 41.13

punīhi pāda-rajasā gṛhān no gṛha-medhinām
yac-chaucenānutṛpyanti pitaraḥ sāgnayaḥ surāḥ

I am simply an ordinary householder attached to ritual sacrifices, so please purify my home with the dust of your lotus feet. By that one act of purification, my forefathers, the sacrificial fires and the *devatās* will all become satisfied continually.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

“Your houses will be protected by the worship of the Pitṛs, the sacrificial fire and the *devatās*.” Purify our houses with the dust from your feet. We are householders, constantly engaged in harming others in five ways (by fire, sweeping, crushing, drowning and grinding). By purifying just once, they will all be continually satisfied (*anutṛpyanti*). By satisfying the Pitṛs and *devatās,* our household duties will be completed. Thus the houses will be successful.

Text 41.14

avanijyāṅghri-yugalam āsīt ślokyo balir mahān
aiśvaryam atulaṁ lebhe gatiṁ caikāntināṁ tu yā

By bathing your feet, the exalted Bali Mahārāja attained not only unequaled power but also the final goal of pure devotees.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This is not empty praise. One can see the results. Or Kṛṣṇa may say “Then just take some dust or water from my feet to your houses.” I desire to wash your feet just as Bali did. Bali was the best among those with good qualities since he is praised by Vyāsa and others. He attained powers unobtainable by Indra and what is attained by the greatest devotees. In this world the Lord became his doorkeeper.

Text 41.15

āpas te 'ṅghry-avanejanyas trīl̐ lokāñchucayo 'punan
śirasādhatta yāḥ śarvaḥ svar yātāḥ sagarātmajāḥ

The water of the river Ganges has purified the three worlds, by having bathed your feet. Śiva accepted that water on his head, and by that water's grace the sons of King Sagara attained heaven.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

That is the glory of the water that washed your feet. The power of being touched by that water is most astonishing. Other holy places become impure by burning up great sins of the people who visit. But your foot water as the Gaṅgā is the purest (*śucayaḥ*) and never becomes impure. Not only does it purify the three worlds but it is worshipped by Śiva, the chief of all the protectors of the planets, who is worthy of worship. Śiva holds that water on his head.

athāpi yat-pāda-nakhāvasṛṣṭaṁ
jagad viriñcopahṛtārhaṇāmbhaḥ
seśaṁ punāty anyatamo mukundāt
ko nāma loke bhagavat-padārthaḥ

Who can be called by the name Bhagavān except Mukunda whose toe-nail water purifies the universe along with Śiva and becomes *arghya* for Brahmā! SB 1.18.21

The impurity of the crematorium (Śiva's place) is destroyed. Thus the water from your feet is the ultimate goal of all people. Not only does that water purify by its touch but it produces the highest purity, giving attainment of Brahmaloka to Sagara's sons just by touching that place where the sons of Sagara were burned up—even though they were great offenders and were burned up because of their offenses. The sons attained the three worlds (*svar*), meaning the top of the three worlds, Brahmaloka. This is explained in the Ninth Canto. That water purifies. It is most worshipable. It liberates the worst offenders and gives them the highest goal. That is the order of glory stated here.

Text 41.16

deva-deva jagan-nātha puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtana
yadūttamottamaḥ-śloka nārāyaṇa namo 'stu te

O Lord of lords, master of the universe, O you whose glories are most pious to hear and chant! O best of the Yadus, O whose fame is recounted in excellent poetry! O Supreme shelter of the *jīvas*! I offer you my obeisances.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

O Lord of lords! By your coming it is certain that there will be great purification. Or, you are worthy of worship by the *devatās.* Though you are merciful to them because they serve you, you should be merciful to me since you are the Lord of the universe (*jagan-nātha*). "But I give mercy to pure people." I will become pure by hearing your glories (*puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtana*). Or you will purify me greatly by letting me see you, since you purify people just by having them hear or chant your glories. I am worthy of your mercy since I have been born in the Yadu dynasty and you are the best of the Yadus, appearing in their family. "How can I give you mercy since you are an associate of Kaṁsa and have committed an offense in Gokula?" You have the greatest qualities (*uttama-śloka*), by which you gave a place in the spiritual world to Pūtanā and others. "Since I am the Lord, I do this if I wish, and sometimes I do not do it." You are the shelter of all *jīvas* (*nārāyaṇa*). You may or may not give mercy, but you are the shelter of all *jīvas.* In great zeal, Akrūra then falls on the ground and grasps Kṛṣṇa's feet. I offer respects to you (*namaḥ*). He prays only to Kṛṣṇa since he considers Balarāma to be non-different from him, because the two brothers have such great affection for each other and because Kṛṣṇa is the most prominent.

Text 41.17

śrī-bhagavan uvāca
āyāsye bhavato geham aham arya-samanvitaḥ
yadu-cakra-druhaṁ hatvā vitariṣye suhṛt-priyam

The Supreme Lord said: I will come to your house with my elder brother, but first I must satisfy my friends and well-wishers by killing the enemy of

the Yadu clan.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I will come with Balarāma. Kṛṣṇa would not come with the other cowherds, since they would not stay that long in Mathurā. When will that be? I will come when I have killed the enemy of the Yadus. He does not directly mention Kaṁsa because of Kaṁsa's inauspiciousness and fear of revealing the plan. I will show affection for the Yadus by freeing Vasudeva and others. It is not proper to come to your house and receive a welcome when the Yadus are suffering and my parents are imprisoned.

Text 41.18

śrī-śuka uvāca
evam ukto bhagavatā so 'krūro vimanā iva
purīṁ praviṣṭaḥ kaṁsāya karmāvedya gṛhaṁ yayau

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed by the Lord, Akrūra entered the city with a heavy heart. He informed King Kaṁsa of the success of his mission and then went home.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Most eager, and joyful that he had brought Kṛṣṇa, he was now morose. *Iva* is an ornament (it does not mean "as if" in the context). Or, since Kṛṣṇa promised to come later, and had promised to kill Kaṁsa, he was not really morose. He thought, "Tomorrow Kṛṣṇa will kill Kaṁsa and come to my house." Thus he went home to clean his house for Kṛṣṇa's coming. Out of attachment for Kṛṣṇa, he did nothing else until Kṛṣṇa arrived. It is not described anywhere later that he did anything else.

Text 41.19

athāparāhne bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇānvitaḥ
mathurāṁ prāviśad gopair didṛkṣuḥ parivāritaḥ

Kṛṣṇa desired to see Mathurā, so toward evening he took Balarāma and the cowherd boys with and entered the city.

COMMENTARY: After Akrūra entered the city, the Lord, who displayed his powers (*bhagavān*) and who attracted all hearts (*kṛṣṇaḥ*), entered the city to give mercy to the inhabitants by attracting their minds. He was endowed with the *bhāva* of attracting the hearts of devotees (*saṅkārṣaṇānvitaḥ*). Or he went with Balarāma, who had the same *bhāva*. In this way, he would be happy in seeing the city. His friends like Śrīdāmā served him. Or he was surrounded completely by them, since Balarāma or Nanda feared for his safety.

Texts 41.20–23

dadarśa tāṁ sphāṭika-tuṅga-gopura-
dvārāṁ bṛhad-dhema-kapāṭa-toraṇām
tāmrāra-koṣṭhāṁ parikhā-durāsadām
udyāna-ramyopavanopaśobhitām
sauvarṇa-śṛṅgāṭaka-harmya-niṣkuṭaiḥ
śreṇī-sabhābhir bhavanair upaskṛtām
vaidūrya-vajrāmala-nīla-vidrumair
muktā-haridbhir valabhīṣu vediṣu
juṣṭeṣu jālāmukha-randhra-kuṭṭimeṣv
āviṣṭa-pārāvata-barhi-nāditām
saṁsikta-rathyāpaṇa-mārga-catvarāṁ
prakīrṇa-mālyāṅkura-lāja-taṇḍulām
āpūrṇa-kumbhair dadhi-candanokṣitaiḥ
prasūna-dīpāvalibhiḥ sa-pallavaiḥ
sa-vṛnda-rambhā-kramukaiḥ sa-ketubhiḥ
sv-alaṅkṛta-dvāra-gṛhāṁ sa-paṭṭikaiḥ

The Lord saw Mathurā, with its tall gates and household entrances made of crystal, its immense archways and main doors of gold, its granaries and other storehouses of copper and brass, and its impregnable moats. Beautifying the city were pleasant gardens and parks. The main intersections were fashioned of gold, and there were mansions with private pleasure gardens, along with guildhalls and many other buildings. Mathurā resounded with the calls of peacocks and pet turtledoves, which sat in the small openings of the lattice windows and on the gem-studded floors, and also on the columned balconies and on the ornate rafters in

front of the houses. These balconies and rafters were adorned with *vaidurya* stones, diamonds, crystal quartz, sapphires, coral, pearls and emeralds. All the royal avenues and commercial streets were sprinkled with water, as were the side roads and courtyards, and flower garlands, newly grown sprouts, parched grains and rice had been scattered about everywhere. Gracing the houses' doorways were elaborately decorated pots filled with water, which were bedecked with mango leaves, smeared with yogurt and sandalwood paste, and encircled by flower petals and ribbons. Near the pots were flags, rows of lamps, bunches of flowers and the trunks of banana and betel-nut trees.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The city is described in four verses. First the natural beauty is described. *Āra* means brass. The city is said to have moats since the east and north sides were bordered by the Yamunā. The gardens (*udyāna*) were filled with fruits and the *upavanas* were mainly growing flowers. The grove where the cowherds left their carts was outside the city and was a natural forest, not produced by humans. The groves were attractive. *Koṣṭām* can refer to the walls of the fort. The city was decorated with groves and pleasant gardens. The order of excellence are the gardens first, then the groves, the moats, treasuries and the entrance gates and other doors made of gold.

According to Kṣīrasvāmī *valabhi* means the support of a roof, a cross beam or the crest of a roof. Halayudha says that *vallabhi* means the roof of a house. It also refers to a stone ridge covering a house made of brick. *Trikāṇḍaśeṣa* says that *valabhi* means a room at the top of a house. *Māgha-kāvya* says *yasyām asevanta namadvalīkāḥ samaṁ vadhūbhir valabhīr yuvāṇaḥ:* there the young men enjoyed with their wives on the sloping roofs with turrets. (*Śiśupāla-vadha*3.53)

Vedī refers to a yard surrounded by bricks. The houses resounded with peacocks and doves which were sitting (*āviṣṭa*) in yards and on rooftops in an impassioned condition. Kaṁsa had arranged special decorations to publicize the festival of the bow among the citizens, or there were daily decorations made by the citizens to make the city festive at all times. The decorations indicated the auspicious entrance of Kṛṣṇa into the city. The

roads were sprinkled with water in order to keep the dust down, and made fragrant with perfumed water. Sprouted barley and other grains were scattered about. Decorations were arranged wherever possible.

There were pots filled with pure water (*āpūrṇa*). The doors of the houses were decorated nicely (*su*) with yogurt and other ingredients. In Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary he mentions *toraṇāṇi ca.* Though this is not mentioned in the verse, it follows the verse's intention.

Text 41.24

tāṁ sampraviṣṭau vasudeva-nandanau
vṛtau vayasyair naradeva-vartmanā
draṣṭuṁ samīyus tvaritāḥ pura-striyo
harmyāṇi caivāruruhur nṛpotsukāḥ

The women of Mathurā hurriedly assembled and went forth to see the two sons of Vasudeva as they entered the city on the King's road, surrounded by their cowherd boyfriends. Some of the women, my dear King, eagerly climbed to the roofs of their houses to see them.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Three verses (24-26) describe the scene as the two boys entered completely (*sampraviṣṭa*) into the city. The women came close (*samīyuḥ*) to see them as they entered, but because of the crowds they climbed on the roofs. Though some tried to prevent them, they could not stop them because of their zeal. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit with the same zeal.

Text 41.25

kāścid viparyag-dhṛta-vastra-bhūṣaṇā
vismṛtya caikaṁ yugaleṣv athāparāḥ
kṛtaika-patra-śravanaika-nūpurā
nāṅktvā dvitīyaṁ tv aparāś ca locanam

Some of the ladies put their clothes and ornaments on backwards or forgot one piece, others forgot one of their earrings or ankle bells, and others applied makeup to one eye but not the other.

COMMENTARY: This verse is connected with the next verse. After hearing the commotion which arose from the citizens on seeing the two boys, the women acted in this way. The singular *ekam* is used to express a type. Some put their clothing on backwards. They took two pieces of the clothing but forgot to put one on and then went to see Kṛṣṇa. Then (*atha*), others decorated themselves with only one element of a pair of ornaments. After starting to decorate their eyes with ointment, they left after decorating only one eye. The word *ca* indicates that other anomalies also occurred in their dressing. Another version has *sva-locanam.* The word *sva* indicates that they were absorbed in decorating their eyes.

Text 41.26

aśnantya ekās tad apāsya sotsavā
abhyajyamānā akṛtopamajjanāḥ
svapantya utthāya niśamya niḥsvanaṁ
prapāyayantyo 'rbham apohya mātaraḥ

Those who were taking their meals abandoned them, others went out without finishing their baths or massages, women who were sleeping at once rose when they heard the commotion, and mothers breast-feeding their infants simply put them aside.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Some gave up (*apāsya*) eating their meals and went out, even without performing *ācamana.* The word *apāsya* should be supplied for the other actions also. Others gave up celebrations such as weddings and left the house. Or *sotsavā* can mean that they were all overflowing with joy in their hearts and thus gave up eating, etc. Some who were sleeping woke up and left. Others gave up feeding their newborn infants. This means they fed them later. Since the mothers were greatly affectionate to their infants, it would be harder to leave them than other things. However, even they left their children to see Kṛṣṇa. Thus they are mentioned last.

Text 41.27

manāṁsi tāsām aravinda-locanaḥ
pragalbha-līlā-hasitāvalokaiḥ
jahāra matta-dviradendra-vikramo
dṛśāṁ dadac chrī-ramaṇātmanotsavam

The lotus-eyed Lord, walking with the gait of a lordly elephant in the rut, creating joy for their eyes with his body, which is the source of pleasure for the divine goddess of fortune, captivated those ladies' minds with playful, bold, smiling glances.

COMMENTARY: From far off, he gave pleasure to the eyes of the women by his form, which caused *rati* in even Lakṣmī. When he came closer, he gave pleasure to their eyes by his lotus eyes. Then he gave pleasure by his bold, playful, smiling glances. In this way he stole their minds. *Pragalbha* means he was capable of stealing their minds. Or his brows danced playfully and his smiles became playful on reaching the height of cleverness in the *kaiśora* age. Different types of smiles indicated his different emotions. His glances also displayed those emotions.

His feet moved boldly as if he were a mad elephant. Though the singular *manaḥ* could be used to express the meaning, the plural (*manāṁsi*) is used to show that all their minds were stolen. The meaning becomes startling by indicating that even though they were all shy, all their minds became captivated. Their minds were like their treasures, and he was greedy for those treasures. This is suitable since their minds were filled with *prema.* He gave them pleasure and then stole their minds. This suggests his cleverness in stealing. It is seen that clever thieves steal wealth by deceiving people when there is a great festival. The verse expresses the order in which they saw him (from far to close up). The order of words in the verse is as follows. With his lotus eyes, he stole their minds. What then can be said of his whole body which was the shelter of various pastimes? The words in the instrumental case (*pragalbha-līlā-hasitāvalokaiḥ*) show progressively how their minds became captivated.

Text 41.28

dṛṣṭvā muhuḥ śrutam anudruta-cetasas taṁ
tat-prekṣaṇotsmita-sudhokṣaṇa-labdha-mānāḥ

ānanda-mūrtim upaguhya dṛśātma-labdhaṁ
hṛṣyat-tvaco jahur anantam arindamādhim

The ladies of Mathurā had repeatedly heard about Kṛṣṇa, and thus as soon as they saw him their hearts melted. They felt honored that he was sprinkling upon them the nectar of his glances and attractive smiles. Taking him into their hearts through their eyes, they embraced him, the embodiment of all ecstasy, and as their bodily hairs stood on end, O subduer of enemies, they forgot the unlimited distress caused by his absence.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Their minds quickly pursued him, or their minds melted with *prema* for him (*anudruta*), first by hearing about him and then by seeing him. This was the cause of embracing him with their eyes. They felt honored by the sprinkling of the nectar of his attractive smiles (*utsmita*) and glances or the nectar of his smiles arising from his glances. They thus gave up unlimited distress because they embraced the form of condensed bliss, having attained him in their minds (*ātma-labdham*) by means of their eyes. If their eyes were filled with tears, or they closed them from shyness or fainting, they were still able to embrace him directly and constantly since he appeared in their minds as a *sphūrti.* The symptoms of the embraces were that their hairs stood on end on all parts of their bodies. The obstacles to special r*asas* related to Kṛṣṇa are material *rasas* such as material conjugal *rasa.* Lack of proper judgment or such a material view may be called an enemy. O destroyer of obstacles or enemies (*arindama*)! Their *rasa* has been described to you, who has destroyed all obstacles to *rasa.* I would not describe this to you if it were otherwise.

Text 41.29

prāsāda-śikharārūḍhāḥ prīty-utphulla-mukhāmbujāḥ
abhyavarṣan saumanasyaiḥ pramadā bala-keśavau

Their lotus faces blooming with affection, the ladies who had climbed to the roofs of the mansions rained down showers of flowers upon Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The sign of the disappearance of suffering is shown. Previously it was said that the women climbed on the roofs. Here it is described that they climbed to the very top of the buildings. This shows their extreme zeal. They completely (*abhi*) covered (*varṣan*) Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with flowers since the two were together (but they fell in love with Kṛṣṇa). Or they showered both because Balarāma, being his elder brother, was identified with Kṛṣṇa. The word *pramadā* (women) also suggests they had strong (*pra*) desire (*madā*). They showered flowers because they no longer had fear of Kaṁsa since Balarāma manifested strength (*bala*) and Kṛṣṇa showed himself as the killer of Keśī (*keśava*). In fact no one had fear of Kaṁsa at this time. The word *bala* is placed first because being elder, Balarāma walked in front.

Text 41.30

dadhy-akṣataiḥ soda-pātraiḥ srag-gandhair abhyupāyanaiḥ
tāv ānarcuḥ pramuditās tatra tatra dvijātayaḥ

Brāhmaṇas standing along the way honored the two Lords with presentations of yogurt, unbroken barleycorns, pots full of water, garlands, fragrant substances such as sandalwood paste, and other items of worship.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

How the women with special *bhāva* respected Kṛṣṇa with completely soft hearts has been described. Now the actions of the *brāhmaṇas* are described. They worshipped the two with offerings like yogurt, full water pots and other auspicious items like fruit (*abhyupāyanaiḥ*). Why were they not afraid of Kaṁsa? They were overjoyed (*pramuditāḥ*). "He is the Supreme Lord!" In great joy their fear disappeared. Here *dvijātayaḥ* means *brāhmaṇas,* since the *vaiśyas* are described later.

Text 41.31

ūcuḥ paurā aho gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran mahat
yā hy etāv anupaśyanti nara-loka-mahotsavau

The women of Mathurā exclaimed: Oh, what severe austerities the gopīs must have performed to be able to continually see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who are the greatest source of pleasure for all mankind!

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Paurāḥ refers to the *women* of Mathurā since they praise only the *gopīs. Paurāḥ* instead of *pauryaḥ* is poetic license. It was previously shown that both men and women were overjoyed. Now Kṛṣṇa is glorified by all the citizens to show the reason why they could see his form (performance of austerities). The *gopīs* represent all the inhabitants of Vraja. The two boys were a joy for humans. This also represents all beings on earth, but humans are the most important. Therefore they are mentioned. Or the two were a joy for the humans and all the fourteen worlds (*loka*). Or the two were a joy for all *jīvas* (*naraloka*). The *gopīs* and others continually see (*anupaśyanti)* the two boys. The present tense is used because it was possible that the two would return to Vraja.

Text 41.32

rajakaṁ kañcid āyāntaṁ raṅga-kāraṁ gadāgrajaḥ
dṛṣṭvāyācata vāsāṁsi dhautāny aty-uttamāni ca

Seeing an approaching washer man who had been dyeing some clothes, Kṛṣṇa asked him for the finest laundered garments he had.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The great joy of the good citizens has been described. Now the opposite reaction of the wicked is described, starting with the washer man. This is described in six verses (32-37). *Rajakaṁ kañcid* indicates a loyal follower of Kaṁsa with a demonic nature. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes him as a wicked follower of Kaṁsa (*tasya durātmanaḥ*). He had some cloth for selling. However, to deceive Kṛṣṇa, he said the cloth was for Kaṁsa. He was going from the washing place into the city. Kṛṣṇa's glance upon him was the dyer's only auspiciousness, for it is said that a dyer with freshly washed

cloth is inauspicious. The alliteration in *rajakam* and *raṅgakāram* is repeated with the word *gadagrajaḥ.* Or *gadāgrajaḥ* indicates that though Gada was famous for good qualities, Kṛṣṇa, his elder brother who was Svayam Bhagavān, would have so much more qualities.

This phrase also indicates that at the beginning of pastimes with the Yadus, Gada, chief among all the brothers of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, had been born. There were two Gadas. Three sons of Rohiṇī were Balarāma, Gada and Sāraṇa. Another wife of Vasudeva called Devarakṣitā had sons starting with Gada. That is the Gada mentioned in this verse, since Rohiṇī's son Gada had not been born yet. This is understood from other sources also. Gada was a younger relative and played with Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā along with Balarāma, being older than other relatives. *Kaccid gadāgrajaḥ saumya karoti pura-yoṣitām*: O gentle Uddhava, is the elder brother of Gada now bestowing on the city women the pleasure that actually belongs to us? (SB 10.47.40) Rukmiṇī later says:

pūrteṣṭa-datta-niyama-vrata-deva-vipra
gurv-arcanādibhir alaṁ bhagavān pareśaḥ
ārādhito yadi gadāgraja etya pāṇiṁ
gṛhṇātu me na damaghoṣa-sutādayo 'nye

If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Lord by pious works, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the *devatās, brāhmaṇas* and gurus, then may Gadāgraja come and take my hand, and not Damaghoṣa's son or anyone else. SB 10.52.40

Text 41.33

dehy āvayoḥ samucitāny aṅga vāsāṁsi cārhatoḥ
bhaviṣyati paraṁ śreyo dātus te nātra saṁśayaḥ

[Kṛṣṇa said:] Please give suitable garments to the two of us, who certainly deserve them. If you grant this charity, you will undoubtedly receive the greatest benefit.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse describes how he asked for the cloth. O dyer (*aṅga*)! These clothes are suitable since they have the color and form suitable for us. You

cannot say that this cloth is not suitable for us. We deserve this cloth (*arhatoḥ*). "How can I give it without payment?" There will be the greatest benefit in this life and the next (*śreyaḥ*) for the donor. Otherwise there will be no auspiciousness. He made this statement to reveal the washer man's wicked nature when he responded. Even in death he would get benefit. After sometime he would receive more than the price of the cloth. He would obtain the highest benefit. Even to the wicked, Kṛṣṇa spoke most gently. By this proper conduct, he also desired to remove any criticism concerning killing the washer man since such criticism is intolerable to the devotees. Another meaning of the last line is "One who does not give (*adatuḥ*) will not attain Vaikuṇṭha, but will merge in Brahman. For him, in this life there is only doubt or death."

Text 41.34

sa yācito bhagavatā paripūrṇena sarvataḥ
sākṣepaṁ ruṣitaḥ prāha bhṛtyo rājñaḥ su-durmadaḥ

Thus requested by the Supreme Lord, who is perfectly complete in all respects, that arrogant servant of the King became angry and replied insultingly.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, who is complete in all ways, requested him. He did not need any cloth. He was an ocean of sweetness capable of instantly manifesting unlimited excellent cloth. He asked because he was the Lord who had appeared to relieve the earth of its burden. This would produce a reason to kill Kaṁsa. Or the cause of his being complete was that he was full of all powers (*bhagavān*).

The washerman spoke distinctly. He spoke insultingly because he was a servant of Kaṁsa and was very wicked (*su-durmadaḥ*).

Kaṁsasya rajakaḥ so 'tha prāsādāruḍha-vismayaḥ: Kaṁsa's washer man who was going to the palace became astonished. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) Another version has *sudurmukhaḥ* (speaking rudely) instead of *sudurmadaḥ* (proud). *Hari-vaṁśa* says *prāptāviṣṭāya murkhāya sṛjate vāṅmayaṁ viṣam*: he began speaking poison in order to attain the destination desired by the foolish.

Text 41.35

īdṛśāny eva vāsāṁsī nityaṁ giri-vane-caraḥ
paridhatta kim udvṛttā rāja-dravyāṇy abhīpsatha

[The washer man said:] You impudent boys! You're accustomed to roaming the mountains and forests, and yet you would dare put on such clothes as these! You desire the King's possessions.

COMMENTARY: You are of bad character or uncontrolled (*udvṛttāḥ*). Do you desire to put on these clothes? He laughs. You do not belong to the king's family. Even at the time of final destruction, you will remain excluded. Why do you desire the king's possessions? You should not do so. Plural number is used to indicate all the cowherd boys. Or will you put on these clothes every day (*nityam*)? Or how arrogant you are (*kim udvṛttāḥ*).

Text 41.36

yātāśu bāliśā maivaṁ prārthyaṁ yadi jijīvīṣā
badhnanti ghnanti lumpanti dṛptaṁ rāja-kulāni vai

Fools, get out of here quickly! Don't beg like this if you want to stay alive. When someone is too bold, the King's men arrest him, kill him and take all his property.

COMMENTARY: O fools! Or O boys (*bāliśa*)! This means they had not reached *yauvana* age. You are innocent, without pride. Quickly flee! Do not ask for anything again. The king's men will beat you and stab you.

Text 41.37

evaṁ vikatthamānasya kupito devakī-sutaḥ
rajakasya karāgreṇa śiraḥ kāyād apātayat

As the washer man thus spoke brazenly, the son of Devakī became angry, and then with a sword in his hand he separated the man's head from his body.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The washer man had spoken rashly in a loud voice, praising himself, and opposing the Lord (*vikatthamānasya*), "I am a great craftsman, personal

servant to the king." *Hari-vaṁśa* makes this clear.

ahaṁ kaṁsasya vāsāṁsi nānādeśodbhavāni ca
kāma-rāgāṇi śataśo rajāmi vividhāni ca

I dye thousands of pieces of Kaṁsa's clothes which come from various states in a variety of attractive colors.

Kṛṣṇa became angry because the washer man was siding with Kaṁsa and also insulted Balarāma by using the plural number in speaking about Kṛṣṇa. Standing with a sword in his hand, he cut off his head from his body, making it fly a great distance. He is here called the son of Devakī because, pained by the suffering inflicted on Devakī by Kaṁsa, how could Kṛṣṇa tolerate the audacity of Kaṁsa's followers?

Text 41.38

tasyānujīvinaḥ sarve vāsaḥ-kośān visṛjya vai
dudruvuḥ sarvato mārgaṁ vāsāṁsi jagṛhe 'cyutaḥ

The washer man's assistants all dropped their bundles of clothes and fled down the road, scattering in all directions. Kṛṣṇa, remaining at that place, then took the clothes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Vai means certainly. Another version has *ca*, indicating they left clothing and other items. The men and donkeys fled here and there (*sarvataḥ*) on the road. Or they fled in all directions on the road. Or they fled everywhere, not on the road (*amārgam*). They did not use the road and fled to other places (not the city). Kṛṣṇa remained on the spot (*acyutaḥ*).

Text 41.39

vasitvātma-priye vaster kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇas tathā
śeṣāṇy ādatta gopebhyo visṛjya bhuvi kānicit

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma put on pairs of garments that especially pleased them, and then Kṛṣṇa distributed the remaining clothes among the cowherd boys, leaving some scattered on the ground.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma dressed themselves up in yellow and blue lower and upper cloths, dear to them (*ātma-priye*). They gave clothing to each of the other boys according to the desire of each (*ādatta*). Or they took the extra cloth to give it out. The intention of the Lord was this. "These splendid cloths have been given by Kaṁsa to glorify his family members at the great festival. In order to destroy his glory, I will make my family glorious. First I will uproot his confidence." Actually, these clothes belonged to Kṛṣṇa, like the daughters of kings stolen by Narakāsura. By the *līlā-śakti,* for creating sweetness in his pastimes, he obtained those cloths.

Text 41.40

tatas tu vāyakaḥ prītas tayor veṣam akalpayat
vicitra-varṇaiś caileyair ākalpair anurūpataḥ

Thereupon a weaver came forward and, feeling affection for the Lords, nicely adorned their attire with cloth ornaments of various colors.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having punished the wicked in order to give joy to the righteous, Kṛṣṇa then showed mercy to the righteous. First he gave mercy to the weaver. After the killing of the washer man and putting on the clothes, a weaver, showing affection, made ornaments like bracelets and earrings for the two boys out of gems, gold and cloth of various colors brought from his house. Where did they put their jewels they were already wearing? Why did he give cloth ornaments? These ornaments were suitable (*anurūpataḥ*) for his wrestling pastimes in which his limbs would be pressed. And the ornaments were suitable for each of them.

Text 41.41

nānā-lakṣaṇa-veṣābhyāṁ kṛṣṇa-rāmau virejatuḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtau bāla-gajau parvaṇīva sitetarau

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked resplendent, each in his own unique, wonderfully ornamented outfit. They resembled a pair of young

elephants, one white and the other black, decorated for a festive occasion.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

With their pleasing attire of various sorts individually suitable for each of the two (*veṣābhyām*), they appeared brilliant, since they had accepted the service of the devotee. They were like two elephants, one white and one black. However, in the same sentence Kṛṣṇa is mentioned before Balarāma. The order is reversed because the main point is the beauty of their ornaments without regard for who was first and second.

Text 41.42

tasya prasanno bhagavān prādāt sārūpyam ātmanaḥ
śriyaṁ ca paramāṁ loke balaiśvarya-smṛtīndriyam

Pleased with the weaver, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed him that after death he would achieve a spiritual form like the Lord's, and that while in this world he would enjoy supreme affluence, physical strength, influence, memory and sensory vigor.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The Lord especially gave (*pra-adāt*) him (*tasya*) a spiritual form like his own (*sārūpyam*). The possessive case is used (*tasya*) instead of the dative case (*tasmai*) to show that the weaver was qualified for obtaining a spiritual form and planet because of his *bhakti.* In this life (*loke*) the weaver would attain the greatest wealth, strength, power, memory and strong senses. What to speak of his next life! Or he gave him these blessings in the presence of others (*loke*). The prefix *pra* (very much) indicates that he gave a special form, that of a cowherd (*ātmanaḥ*). He would have opulence greater (*śriyam paramām*) than that of Brahmā. The word *ca* indicates that he also got the highest powers all together, at once, in the manner of Kubjā. This was possible because Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān.

Text 41.43

tataḥ sudāmno bhavanaṁ mālā-kārasya jagmatuḥ
tau dṛṣṭvā sa samutthāya nanāma śirasā bhuvi

The two Lords then went to the house of the garland-maker Sudāmā. When Sudāmā saw them he at once stood up and then bowed down, placing his head on the ground.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After the two had been decorated with cloth ornaments (*tataḥ*), they needed flower garlands. Or after giving mercy to the weaver they gave even more (*tataḥ*) mercy to the garland maker. The reasons he did not approach the Lord earlier like all others was that he was absorbed in making a splendid garland for Kṛṣṇa. This will be made clear later. He got up from his seat with great respect (*sam-utthāya)* and then touched his head to the ground. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *bhuvaṁ viṣṭabhya hastābhyāṁ pasparśa śirasā mahīm:* putting his hands on the ground, he then touched his head to the ground. All the garland maker's assistants had also gone out to see the Lord. The garland maker's eyes were fixed upon his garland. When the Lord suddenly approached him by his mercy, the garland maker did not have room to offer full respects on the ground. Thus he only touched his head. Or, out of confusion he could not remember to offer full respects on the ground.

Text 41.44

tayor āsanam ānīya pādyaṁ cārghyārhaṇādibhiḥ
pūjāṁ sānugayoś cakre srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ

After offering them seats and bathing their feet, Sudāmā worshiped them and their companions with *arghya*, garlands, betel, sandalwood paste and other presentations.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Arghya refers to a mixture of eight auspicious items: fragrant oil, flowers, unbroken barleycorns, husked barleycorns, the tips of *kuśa* grass, sesame seeds, mustard seeds and *dūrvā* grass. *Arahaṇa* refers to other items offered during worship such as incense, lamps and food. The word *ādi*

indicates offering *cāmara*, fan and *āratrika.* Though he offered all these items, he offered worship again using garlands, betel-nut and sandalwood.

Text 41.45

prāha naḥ sārthakaṁ janma pāvitaṁ ca kulaṁ prabho
pitṛ-devarṣayo mahyaṁ tuṣṭā hy āgamanena vām

[Sudāmā said:] O Lord, my birth is now sanctified and my family free of contamination. Now that you both have come here, my forefathers, th*e devatās* and the great sages are certainly all satisfied with me.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Then Sudāmā began praising him with devotion. His voice choked because of *prema,* he spoke excellently. He speaks in the plural (*naḥ*) to indicate his great respect for Kṛṣṇa's coming there or to indicate his family members. By your coming, just by your touching the objects of my house, the Pitṛs and *devatās* are satisfied. What to speak of seeing you directly! My life has become successful by your coming and directly seeing the two of you. All ancestors and relatives, past and future have been delivered. Since the Pitṛs are satisfied, all duties are fulfilled. The word *hi* indicates there is proof. Akrūra will later say:

adyeśa no vasatayaḥ khalu bhūri-bhāgā
yaḥ sarva-deva-pitṛ-bhūta-nṛ-deva-mūrtiḥ
yat-pāda-śauca-salilaṁ tri-jagat punāti
sa tvaṁ jagad-gurur adhokṣaja yāḥ praviṣṭaḥ

Today, O Lord, my home has become most fortunate because you have entered it. As the Supreme Truth, you embody the forefathers, ordinary creatures, human beings and demigods, and the water that has washed your feet purifies the three worlds. Indeed, O transcendent one, you are the spiritual master of the universe. SB 10.48.25

The reason for all of this is that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord (*prabho*).

Text 41.46

bhavantau kila viśvasya jagataḥ kāraṇaṁ param
avatīrṇāv ihāṁśena kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca

You two Lords are the ultimate cause of this entire universe. To bestow sustenance and prosperity upon this realm, you have descended with your plenary expansions.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"Why are you praising us, the two sons of Nanda?" He answers with this verse. It is well known from scripture *(kila*) that you two are the cause of the temporary universe starting with *mahat-tattva* and other elements. But more than being the cause as *puruṣāvatāras*, you are supreme as Svayam Bhagavān in Mathurā. You have appeared along with your associates the cowherds and the Yādavas. The singular *(aṁśena*) is used to represent one class of beings. Or you two are the cause of the universe by your expansion.

yasyāṁśāṁśāṁśa-bhāgena viśvotpatti-layodayāḥ
bhavanti kila viśvātmaṁs taṁ tvādyāhaṁ gatiṁ gatā

O Soul of all that be, the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are all carried out by a fraction of an expansion of an expansion of your expansion. Today I have come to take shelter of you, the Supreme Lord. SB 10.85.31

The repetition of the word *ca* indicates that fearlessness in this life and the next (*kṣemāya*) and prosperity are the two principle purposes of their appearance.

Text 41.47

na hi vāṁ viṣamā dṛṣṭiḥ suhṛdor jagad-ātmanoḥ
samayoḥ sarva-bhūteṣu bhajantaṁ bhajator api

Because you are the well-wishing friends and Supreme Soul of the whole universe, you regard all with unbiased vision. Therefore, although you reciprocate your devotees' loving worship, you always remain equally disposed toward all living beings.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You two are the friends since you assist all beings by bestowing *jñāna-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti* to them and are the souls of all conscious and unconscious things (*jagad-ātmanoḥ*), since you are the root cause of all consciousness. Or in spreading over the universe you are the friends and souls of all beings. The word *api* indicates all beings. You respond to all those who worship you. You are the shelter of any person—from *brāhmaṇa* to *caṇḍāla*—who surrenders to you. Therefore you do not have prejudiced vision since, having an equal vision, you are the friend of all and the soul of all. Though you are merciful to those who worship you, you do not have a prejudiced vision, since you are equal in material happiness and distress. The sun is not affected by darkness and the owl's eye does not see light. Similarly, material happiness and sorrow cannot affect the consciousness of you two.

samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ |
ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham ||

I am equal to all living beings. I do not hate anyone nor do I favor anyone. To whatever extent a person worships me with devotion, I am attached to him in a similar way. BG 9.29

sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api

The pure devotee is my very heart: what pains him pains me. I am the heart of the pure devotee: what pleases him pleases me. My devotees do not know anything else but me, and I do not know more than they do. SB 9.4.68

In both the above verses, the Lord's heart is affected by *bhakti* and nothing else.

Or, Sudāmā speaks out of humility. The two Lords, by coming to the house of a low person devoid of *bhakti,* show equal vision to all beings. You do not have a prejudiced vision (*na hi vāṁ viṣamā dṛṣṭiḥ*) thinking, "This person deserves mercy and that person does not," since you two have unconditional mercy (*suhṛdoḥ*). Moreover, you have affection for the universe (j*agad-ātmanoḥ).* Though you show mercy to those who worship you, you are equal to all beings high or low, since you are Lords of the universe and affectionate to the fallen.

Text 41.48

tāv ajñāpayataṁ bhṛtyaṁ kim ahaṁ karavāṇi vām
puṁso 'ty-anugraho hy eṣa bhavadbhir yan niyujyate

Please order me, your servant, to do whatever you wish. To be engaged by you in some service is certainly a great blessing for anyone.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The two are devoid of prejudice. "Then follow my order in the form of the Vedas." What can I do for you two who have come to me directly? "Without my ordering you, you performed your duty of welcoming us as a guest." To be engaged by you is the greatest mercy. This is the greatest mercy for the *jīva* (*puṁsaḥ*). The plural is used in *bhavabdhiḥ* to include Kṛṣṇa's associates as well. He expresses "I desire to do some service to you."

Text 41.49

ity abhipretya rājendra sudāmā prīta-mānasaḥ
śastaiḥ su-gandhaiḥ kusumair mālā viracitā dadau

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O best of kings, having spoken these words, Sudāmā could understand what Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wanted. Thus with great pleasure he presented them with garlands of fresh, fragrant flowers.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because of shyness, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not directly say they wanted the garlands but since they came to the house of a garland maker, he understood their desire by Kṛṣṇa's glance at an unfinished garland. O King! Such a garland is rare even for a king. Or *rajendra* indicates that the garland maker was most fortunate, like a king. The garland was endowed with good color, softness and other qualities or was auspicious because of its qualities. He gave garlands which were suitable for the Lords (*vi-racitām*), better than previous garlands suitable for kings. He gave Kṛṣṇa one such garland and gave others as well. The garland was superior to

previous garlands. Another version has *viracitā.* He gave garlands which had been made by his family, to the two boys who came suddenly. He gave garlands which had been made quickly for worship. Otherwise the word *viracitā* would be meaningless in the verse. He gave with great pleasure. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

tataḥ prahṛṣṭa-vadanas tayoḥ puṣpaṇi kāmataḥ
cārūṇy etānyathaitāni pradadau sa pralobhayan

With a smiling face, with great greed, he gave the two boys beautiful flowers.

Text 41.50

tābhiḥ sv-alaṅkṛtau prītau kṛṣṇa-rāmau sahānugau
praṇatāya prapannāya dadatur vara-dau varān

Beautifully adorned with these garlands, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were delighted, and so were their companions. The two Lords then offered the surrendered Sudāmā, who was bowing down before them, whatever benedictions he desired.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After giving the garland, Sudāmā offered respects on the ground with eight limbs. He also surrendered, saying "Please save me." Or for a long time Kṛṣṇa offered blessings to his devotee.

Text 41.51

so 'pi vavre 'calāṁ bhaktiṁ tasminn evākhilātmani
tad-bhakteṣu ca sauhārdaṁ bhūteṣu ca dayāṁ parām

Sudāmā chose unshakable devotion for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul of all existence; friendship with his devotees; and compassion for all living beings.

COMMENTARY: Though the two offered boons, Sudāmā prayed to Kṛṣṇa with devotion. The word *api* indicates that this was his desire among his many desires. He wanted bhakti to Kṛṣṇa only. "At this time, he had praised and worshipped Baladeva as well as Kṛṣṇa. Why did he not ask for devotion to

Balarāma?" Kṛṣṇa is spread as avatāra in Balarāma (*ātmani*) and others or is dear to them all. By bhakti to Kṛṣṇa, bhakti to Balarāma is accomplished. Or Kṛṣṇa is the lord of the universe (*akhilātman*i). By prayers to Kṛṣṇa, everything is accomplished, since he is non-different from Balarāma. Doing otherwise would be inappropriate. Balarāma is included among the devotees. Previously, they were both praised to please Kṛṣṇa. The word *eva* indicates exclusive devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Sudāmā prayed for unconditional mercy for all beings. The first *ca* means "but." The second *ca* means "all." (He is most merciful to all beings, but he is the friend of the devotee.)

Text 41.52

iti tasmai varaṁ dattvā śriyaṁ cānvaya-vardhinīm
balam āyur yaśaḥ kāntiṁ nirjagāma sahāgrajaḥ

Not only did Kṛṣṇa grant Sudāmā these benedictions, but he also awarded him strength, long life, fame, beauty and ever-increasing prosperity for his family. Then Kṛṣṇa and his elder brother took their leave.

COMMENTARY: "Why did Kṛṣṇa not give him benedictions since he is most generous?" After he prayed for *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa gave him all wealth. The word *ca* indicates "all." Another version has *anvaya-vardhinam* (increased descendants) instead of *anvaya-vardhanīm* (uninterrupted wealth in his dynasty). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

balahānirna te saumya dhanahānir athāpi vā
yāvad dināni tāvacca na naśiṣyati saṁtatiḥ
bhuktvā ca vipulān bhogāṁs tvam ante mat-prasādataḥ
mamānusmaraṇaṁ prāpya divyaṁ lokam avāpsyasi
dharme manaś ca te bhadra sārvakālaṁ bhaviṣyati
yuṣmat saṁtatijātānāṁ dhīrgham āyur bhaviṣyati
nopasargādikaṁ doṣaṁ yuṣmat saṁtati-saṁbhavaḥ
avāpsyati mahābhāga yāvat sūryo bhaviṣyati

As long as you live on this earth, you will not decrease in strength. Your wealth will not decrease and your offspring will not perish. After enjoying by my mercy, finally, remembering me, you will attain the spiritual world. O auspicious one! Your mind will be fixed in dharma at all times. Your

offspring will have a long life. O fortunate one! Your offspring will not experience troubles as long as the sun exists.

Strength, long life, fame, beauty and ever-increasing prosperity for his family are all aspects of *śriyam ānvaya-vardhinīm.* Then after giving benedictions, Kṛṣṇa left Sudāmā's house with his elder brother.

Balarāma approved of the benedictions. Or though Kṛṣṇa wanted to stay because of Sudāmā's *bhakti*, Balarāma desired to go. Though not mentioned, the cowherd boys also left with them, since they followed Kṛṣṇa. They naturally went with him, not separately.

Chapter Forty-two
The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

Text 42.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
atha vrajan rāja-pathena mādhavaḥ
striyaṁ gṛhītāṅga-vilepa-bhājanām
vilokya kubjāṁ yuvatīṁ varānanāṁ
papraccha yāntīṁ prahasan rasa-pradaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As he walked down the King's road, Mādhava then saw a young hunchback woman with an attractive face, who carried a tray of fragrant ointments as she walked along. The bestower of the ecstasy of love smiled and inquired from her as follows

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates auspiciousness, in remembrance of the *gopīs' rasa*. The longer meter introduces a new topic. He walked on the road so that many people could see him, in order to see the beauty of the city, to break the bow, and to come near Kaṁsa's house. He was the beloved of Lakṣmī (*mādhavaḥ*). This shows his great skill in love. Or he was born in the Madhu dynasty: he was pleasing to the Yadus. She carried a container of sandalwood and other unguents. Kubjā's body was bent in three places. But she had a beautiful face and was young. Thus, in all other ways she was attractive. In *Hari-vamśa* she says *rājñaḥ snānagṛhaṁ yāmi*: I am going to the bath house of the king. He laughed in amusement (*pra-hasan*). By his very nature, he was the giver of happiness or attraction (*rasa-pradaḥ*).

Text 42.2

kā tvaṁ varorv etad u hānulepanaṁ
kasyāṅgane vā kathayasva sādhu naḥ
dehy āvayor aṅga-vilepam uttamaṁ
śreyas tatas te na cirād bhaviṣyati

[Kṛṣṇa said:] Who are you, O beautiful-thighed one? Ah, ointment! Who is it for, my dear lady? Please tell us truthfully. Give us both some of your finest ointment and you will soon gain a great boon.

COMMENTARY: Tell us truthfully (*sādhu*), for whose use is this unguent made from sandalwood. Or tell us about this excellent (*sādhu*) ointment. It is suitable for our limbs.

Hari-vaṁśa says *tām uvāca hasantīṁ tu kṛṣṇaḥ kubjām avasthitām ubhayor gātra sadṛśaṁ dīyatām anulepanam*: Kṛṣṇa said to smiling Kubjā, "You should give that ointment suitable for our limbs." *Vayam videśātithayo mallāḥ prāptā varānane dhanur-mahaṁ divyaṁ drāṣṭruṁ caiva maharddhimat:* we two wrestlers from a different place have come to see the great sacrifice of the bow and the prosperous city. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) You will gain a great benediction by giving this ointment (*tataḥ*). This will happen soon or will not happen for a long time. This is a joke. He addresses her twice as a joke or because of her beauty.

Text 42.3

sairandhry uvāca
dāsy asmy ahaṁ sundara kaṁsa-sammatā
trivakra-nāmā hy anulepa-karmaṇi
mad-bhāvitaṁ bhoja-pater ati-priyaṁ
vinā yuvāṁ ko 'nyatamas tad arhati

The maidservant replied: O handsome one, I am a servant of King Kaṁsa, who respects me highly for the ointments I make. My name is Trivakrā. Who else but you two deserve my ointments, which the lord of the Bhojas likes so much?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Trivakra in the masculine is poetic license. (It should be in the feminine). *Hi* means she is well known by that name.

kutaś cāgamyate saumya yan māṁ tvaṁ nāvabudhyase
mahārājasya dayitāṁ niyuktām anulepane

O gentle one! From where have you come, that you do not recognize me as a servant of Kaṁsa in making ointments for him? *Hari-vaṁśa*

Who as the best among many (*anyatama*) deserves these ointments made by me (*mad-bhāvitam*) except you two? She addresses Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma

for using the ointments. O beautiful one! She addresses Kṛṣṇa alone for enjoyment. Or who, so different from you two (*anyatama*), deserves the ointments? This means their friends also deserve the ointments. Or the first sentence can mean "I am your servant." She says this out of love. Then in answer to Kṛṣṇa's question in the previous verse she says, "I am approved by Kaṁsa."

Text 42.4

rūpa-peśala-mādhurya hasitālāpa-vīkṣitaiḥ
dharṣitātmā dadau sāndram ubhayor anulepanam

Her mind overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's beauty, charm, sweetness, smiles, words and glances, Trivakrā gave both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma generous amounts of ointment.

COMMENTARY: She was overwhelmed by the beauty of both of them and thus gave the ointment to both.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

śrutvā tam āha sā kṛṣṇaṁ gṛhyatām iti sādaram
anulepanaṁ pradadau gātra-yogyam athobhayoḥ

Hearing this, she respectfully replied to Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Please take it," and gave both of them ointment suitable for applying to their bodies.

Or overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's beauty she gave to both. The genitive case is used since it is a prayer to Kṛṣṇa. She took them both as her masters out of devotion. She gave them both ointment, and gave other things to the other boys, since there was not so much ointment.

Text 42.5

tatas tāv aṅga-rāgeṇa sva-varṇetara-śobhinā
samprāpta-para-bhāgena śuśubhāte 'nurañjitau

Anointed with these most excellent cosmetics, which adorned them with hues that contrasted with their complexions, the two Lords appeared extremely beautiful.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The two were decorated with various patterns on the cheeks, chest, and arms by friends and Kubjā.

Text 42.6

prasanno bhagavān kubjāṁ trivakrāṁ rucirānanām
ṛjvīṁ kartuṁ manaś cakre darśayan darśane phalam

Since Kṛṣṇa was pleased with Trivakrā, he decided to straighten that hunchbacked girl who possessed a lovely face just to demonstrate the immediate result of seeing him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa, pleased with her, decided to make Kubjā, or Trivakrā, straight. Another reason for making her straight was that she had a lovely face. He showed the immediate result of seeing him.

Text 42.7

padbhyām ākramya prapade dvy-aṅguly-uttāna-pāṇinā
pragṛhya cibuke 'dhyātmam udanīnamad acyutaḥ

Pressing down on her toes with both his feet, Kṛṣṇa placed two upward-pointing fingers under her chin and straightened up her body.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa was skillful at grasping, since that was suitable for his wrestling pastime. Taking her chin with the index and middle fingers of his right hand facing upward and supporting her back with his left hand, he pulled up her body (*adhyātman*—that which depends on the soul), whose crooked nature she had to endure as long as she lived because of unavoidable *prārabdha-karmas.* He was determined to perform this special pastime (*acyutaḥ*), and thus he grasped her chin especially (*pragṛhya*), since he could have done all of this just by his desire, without touching her.

Text 42.8

sā tadarju-samānāṅgī bṛhac-chroṇi-payodharā
mukunda-sparśanāt sadyo babhūva pramadottamā

Simply by the touch of Kṛṣṇa, who awards liberation easily, Trivakrā was suddenly transformed into an exquisitely beautiful woman with straight, evenly proportioned limbs and large hips and breasts.

COMMENTARY: In a moment (*tadā*) she became straight. Her proportions became proper (*samānāṅgī*). Or because she was crooked previously her chest and other parts were small and irregular. All limbs became proper according to her age. That is explained. Her hips and breasts became large. Actually, all the limbs became beautiful. She was *pramadottamā*, the best of women.

Kṛṣṇa was he who makes the happiness (*mu*) of liberation (*ku*) insignificant by giving the highest bliss (*da*) of *bhakti*. By his touch, she attained physical blessings. Or he gave principle or spiritual happiness (*mu*) and earthly happiness (*ku*) by his touch. Thus she developed special *bhāva* as well as physical beauty. When he did this, she did not experience any pain.

Text 42.9

tato rūpa-guṇaudārya- sampannā prāha keśavam
uttarīyāntam akṛṣya smayantī jāta-hṛc-chayā

Now endowed with beauty, character and generosity Trivakrā began to feel desire for Keśava. Taking hold of the end of his upper cloth, she smiled and addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Becoming endowed with the greatness of form and qualities, being the best of women, she developed a desire for him, having attained qualification and became intoxicated or smiled (*smayantī*). Another version has *sasmayan.* She spoke (*pra-āha*) with side glances. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *vilāsa-lalitaṁ prāha prema-garbha-bharālasam*: she spoke playfully and languidly, with great love.

Text 42.10

ehi vīra gṛhaṁ yāmo na tvāṁ tyaktum ihotsahe
tvayonmathita-cittāyāḥ prasīda puruṣarṣabha

[Trivakrā said:] Come, O hero, let us go to my house. I cannot bear to leave you here. O best of males, please take pity on me, since you have agitated my mind.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

O hero! She calls out to him, indicating a special quality which excites her own *bhāva.* Another meaning is "O Kṛṣṇa, capable of fulfilling my desires! Please come to my house." "How can I go, giving up my associates?" You, your friends and I will all go. "I will go on another day." I cannot leave you here on the road. Since I will not be able to meet you again, not knowing where you live, I will take you to my house now. Or "Take Balarāma or one of my friends." I cannot leave you. I depend on you alone and no one else. "It is not proper for you to show such boldness here." You have agitated my mind. It is not my fault. Therefore be merciful. Please accept. Since you are merciful, I have no fear of being bold. The cause is mentioned. O best of men! It is not proper for me to give up the best of men.

Text 42.11

evaṁ striyā yācyamānaḥ kṛṣṇo rāmasya paśyataḥ
mukhaṁ vīkṣyānu gopānāṁ prahasaṁs tām uvāca ha

Thus entreated by the woman, Kṛṣṇa first glanced at the face of Balarāma, who was watching the incident, and then at the faces of the cowherd boys. Then with a laugh Kṛṣṇa replied to her as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Being entreated by the women full of desire while Balarāma and his friends watched, Kṛṣṇa looked at the faces of Balarāma and his friends and then laughed loudly in amusement. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

tau jātaharṣāv anyonyaṁ satām ākṣepam avyayau
vīkṣamāṇau prahasitau kubjāyāḥ śruta-vistarau

Overjoyed, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, hearing the suggestive words of Kubjā, looked at each other and laughed loudly.

He spoke to her clearly (*ha*) in such a way that Balarāma and others thought he was cheating her, and she thought that he was keeping his promise.

Text 42.12

eṣyāmi te gṛhaṁ su-bhru puṁsām ādhi-vikarśanam
sādhitārtho ʼgṛhāṇāṁ naḥ pānthānāṁ tvaṁ parāyaṇam

[Kṛṣṇa said:] O lady with beautiful eyebrows, as soon as I fulfill my purpose I will certainly visit your house, where men can relieve their anxiety. Indeed, you are the best refuge for us homeless travelers.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa addresses her as *subhru*. This indicates his desire for her. You are a refuge for travellers. This indicates Balarāma and others as well as himself. He in this way hides his own *bhāva* out of shyness, making a general statement. Or having left our homes and having travelled for a long time, we take shelter of you.

Text 42.13

visṛjya mādhvyā vāṇyā tām vrajan mārge vaṇik-pathaiḥ
nānopāyana-tāmbūla- srag-gandhaiḥ sāgrajo ʼrcitaḥ

Leaving her with these sweet words, Kṛṣṇa walked further down the road. The merchants along the way worshiped him and his elder brother by presenting them with various respectful offerings, including betel-nut, garlands and fragrant substances.

COMMENTARY: He left her with sweet words as described in the last verse, or smiling, he said, “I am controlled by you, since you are fully dedicated to me. I will come because of you.” He entered the city. By giving articles on the road, the *bhakti* and excellence of the merchants is shown. The merchants worshiped him with various offerings. Betel-nut, garlands, and scents are particularly mentioned because they were offered in abundance. The garlands were made of jewels and pearls. The scents were unguents like sandalwood, mixed with *aguru* and other special ingredients, with various colors. He was worshipped along with Balarāma and the other boys. They were first worshipped by *brāhmaṇas* near the Yamunā at the edge of the city. A little further, within the city, they were now worshipped

by *vaiśyas. Kṣatriyas* generally dwelled in the center of the city and thus their worship of Kṛṣṇa is not mentioned.

Text 42.14

tad-darśana-smara-kṣobhād ātmānaṁ nāvidan striyaḥ
visrasta-vāsaḥ-kavara valayā lekhya-mūrtayaḥ

The sight of Kṛṣṇa aroused Cupid in the hearts of the city women. Thus agitated, they forgot themselves. Their clothes, braids and bangles became disheveled, and they stood as still as figures in a painting.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *vaiśya* women on the merchants' streets developed love because of their natural soft natures. Because of fainting or loss of control (*kṣobha*), a symptom of *prema*, they forgot their bodies simply by remembering Kṛṣṇa after seeing him. They were not able to understand where they were at that moment. Their clothing and other times became completely loose. Their clothing and bracelets became loose because their bodies suddenly became thin from the agitation of love. Their hair became loose because their bodies quivered and stretched. They became like painted figures.

Text 42.15

tataḥ paurān pṛcchamāno dhanuṣaḥ sthānam acyutaḥ
tasmin praviṣṭo dadṛśe dhanur aindram ivādbhutam

Kṛṣṇa then asked the local people the location of the arena where the bow sacrifice would take place. When he went there, he saw the amazing bow, which resembled Indra's bow.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After showing mercy to the devotees, completely fixed in knowledge and power (*acyutaḥ*) he asked about the place of the bow, since he was carried away by amusing pastimes. It was like Indra's bow (rainbow) because it was colorful with embedded gems and huge. Thus it was astonishing. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

sa tayor darśayāmāsa tad dhanuḥ stambha-saṁnibham
anāropyam asaṁbhedyaṁ devair api savāsavaiḥ

The guard showed the two boys the bow which was like a pillar, which could not be strung or broken by the *devatās.*

Text 42.16

puruṣair bahubhir guptam arcitaṁ paramarddhimat
vāryamāṇo nṛbhiḥ kṛṣṇaḥ prasahya dhanur ādade

That most valuable bow was guarded by a large company of men, who were respectfully worshiping it. Kṛṣṇa pushed his way forward and, despite the guards' attempts to stop him, picked it up.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The bow was guarded by and worshipped by many of Kaṁsa's servants and thus had a great wealth of ornaments etc. The guards in anger tried to stop him from approaching out of affection for Kaṁsa and fear of Kaṁsa.

Text 42.17

kareṇa vāmena sa-līlam uddhṛtaṁ
sajyaṁ ca kṛtvā nimiṣeṇa paśyatām
nṛṇāṁ vikṛṣya prababhañja madhyato
yathekṣu-daṇḍaṁ mada-kary urukramaḥ

Easily lifting the bow with his left hand, Kṛṣṇa strung it in a fraction of a second as the King's guards looked on. He then powerfully pulled the string and snapped the bow in half, just as an excited elephant might break a stalk of sugar cane.

COMMENTARY: He took the bow carelessly or without effort in his left hand. The word *ca* means that without attention he strung and broke the bow. In a moment, he grabbed the bow, strung it and broke it, while the angry guards and others such as the wrestlers or people in general watched, since it was impossible for them to do. The genitive case is used to show disrespect to them. Or they watched in amazement. Or they watched with unblinking eyes (*animeṣeṇa*). The phrase can also be read *animiṣeṇa paśyatām*: while the guards watched with unblinking eyes. He broke the

bow completely in two (*prababhuñja*) because he had great power (*urukramaḥ*).

ānamyamānaṁ kṛṣṇena prakarṣād uragopamam
dvidhā-bhūtam abhūn madhye dhanur āyoga-bhūṣitam

Bending the jeweled bow completely Kṛṣṇa broke it into two pieces and used it as an ornament. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Āyoga-bhūṣitam means decorated with jewels or a string, or worthy of being used by Kaṁsa. He broke it like a mad elephant breaks sugar cane.

Text 42.18

dhanuṣo bhajyamānasya śabdaḥ khaṁ rodasī diśaḥ
pūrayām āsa yaṁ śrutvā kaṁsas trāsam upāgamat

The sound of the bow's breaking filled the earth and sky in all directions. Upon hearing it, Kaṁsa was struck with terror.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

One should not think that the bow was soft. It was harder than a thunderbolt. First the sound filled the *antarikṣa,* travelling through *ākāśa.* Then the sound spread to Svarga and earth (*rodasī*) since it spread up and down because of its greatness. Then it spread in all directions and filled all planets. Though Kaṁsa instilled fear in the whole world, he became completely (*upa agamat*) terrified of this sound. He considered that this sound indicated the cruelest destruction and thus thought he would immediately die.

Text 42.19

tad-rakṣiṇaḥ sānucaraṁ kupitā ātatāyinaḥ
gṛhītu-kāmā āvavrur gṛhyatāṁ vadhyatām iti

The enraged guards then took up their weapons and, wanting to seize Kṛṣṇa and his companions, surrounded them and shouted, "Seize them! Imprison them!"

COMMENTARY: The guardians of the bow desired to kill Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma and the boys, or they took up their weapons against them. The

hidden meaning however is “Persons like us should be seized and imprisoned.” They made disrespectful statements because of great pride.

Text 42.20

atha tān durabhiprāyān vilokya bala-keśavau
kruddhau dhanvana ādāya śakale tāṁś ca jaghnatuḥ

Seeing the guards coming upon them with evil intent, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa took up the two halves of the bow and began striking them down.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing the guards with evil natures (*durabhiprāyān*) approach, the two boys, becoming angry, took the bow and struck them. The word *tān* is repeated because it is in different statements.

Text 42.21

balaṁ ca kaṁsa-prahitaṁ hatvā śālā-mukhāt tataḥ
niṣkramya ceratur hṛṣṭau nirīkṣya pura-sampadaḥ

After killing a contingent of soldiers sent by Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma left the sacrificial arena by its main gate, became joyful on seeing the wealth of the city and continued to walk about.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They killed the soldiers (*balam*) sent by Kaṁsa, or defeated the ability (*balam*) of Kaṁsa. They left from the gate of the arena and, seeing the wealth of the city, became joyful, and again wandered about casually in the city again.

Text 42.22

tayos tad adbhutaṁ vīryaṁ niśāmya pura-vāsinaḥ
tejaḥ prāgalbhyaṁ rūpaṁ ca menire vibudhottamau

Having witnessed the amazing deed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed, and seeing their strength, boldness and beauty, the people of the city thought they must be the best of *devatās.*

COMMENTARY: The righteous people became joyful on seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma defeat the wicked. They saw their astonishing courage: they killed the guards and broke the bow easily. They also saw their power and confidence (*ca*). By this, the people's minds became attracted to them. Everyone present was affected by the strength or by all powers (*tejas*) and confidence. They walked about boldly or without regard for others. Or they had effulgence which defeated the world and radiated fearlessness, independence, or ferocity (*pragalbhyam*). They had beauty (*rūpam*). Or they had the power to give mercy to everyone (*tejas*) and they showed boldness. His actions, qualities and beauty have been shown. The people thought they were Śiva and Viṣṇu (*vibudhottamau*).

Text 42.23

tayor vicaratoḥ svairam ādityo 'stam upeyivān
kṛṣṇa-rāmau vṛtau gopaiḥ purāc chakaṭam īyatuḥ

As they strolled about at will, the sun began to set, so they left the city with the cowherd boys and returned to the cowherds' wagon encampment.

COMMENTARY: The two wandered throughout the city as they pleased going here and there, surrounded affectionately by the cowherd boys. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first because he was the main person.

Text 42.24

gopyo mukunda-vigame virahāturā yā
āśāsatāśiṣa ṛtā madhu-pury abhūvan
sampaśyatāṁ puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa-gātra-lakṣmīṁ
hitvetarān nu bhajataś cakame 'yanaṁ śrīḥ

At the time of Mukunda's departure from Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs* had foretold that the residents of Mathurā would enjoy many benedictions, and now the *gopīs'* predictions were coming true, for those residents were gazing upon the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the jewel among men. The goddess of fortune desired the shelter of that beauty so much that she abandoned many others, although they worshiped her.

COMMENTARY: The people of Mathurā became blissful as Kṛṣṇa wandered about freely. Their good fortune is described. The auspicious words of the *gopīs* came true for those who saw him directly (*śampaśyatām*), at close range, as he wandered freely as a cowherd with his dear friends. This excluded Kaṁsa's followers.

Or his form only is described to show that great bliss arises from seeing that form. The *gopīs* had said:

adya dhruvaṁ tatra dṛśo bhaviṣyate
dāśārha-bhojāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām
mahotsavaḥ śrī-ramaṇaṁ guṇāspadaṁ
drakṣyanti ye cādhvani devakī-sutam

When the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas see the son of Devakī in Mathurā, they will certainly enjoy a great festival for their eyes, as will all those who see him traveling along the road to the city. After all, he is the darling of the goddess of fortune and the reservoir of all qualities. SB 10.39.25

Madhupuri was named after a demon called Madhu or because it manifested the *rasa* of highest bliss (*madhu*) or because it was the residence of the Yadus, descendants of Madhu. It was suitable for Kṛṣṇa. The reason for the truth of their statement is given: the *gopīs* had spoken in great pain because of separation from he who gave the highest bliss (*mukunda*). The words coming from the mouths of great souls out of great distress immediately produce results. Or whenever the *gopīs* thought of Kṛṣṇa, they thought in this way.

Lakṣmī desired his shelter, though she is served with reverence by many others. But she did not obtain his direct presence. How can one describe the good fortune of the people of Mathurā?

Text 42.25

avaniktāṅghri-yugalau bhuktvā kṣīropasecanam
ūṣatus tāṁ sukhaṁ rātriṁ jñātvā kaṁsa-cikīrṣitam

After Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's feet were bathed, the two Lords ate rice with milk. Then, although knowing what Kaṁsa intended to do, they spent the night there comfortably.

COMMENTARY: Knowing Kaṁsa's evil intentions, they spent the night happily, since they were fearless and had seen the wealth of the city. Or they slept happily with the desire to kill the wrestlers in the arena amidst the crowd in the morning. They had a method of easily killing the demons. They had a desire to wrestle, like playing with the cowherd boys. *Niyuddham ātmano 'bhiṣṭam*: Kṛṣṇa liked to wrestle and welcomed the challenge. (SB 10.43.36)

Texts 42.26–27

kaṁsas tu dhanuṣo bhaṅgaṁ rakṣiṇāṁ sva-balasya ca
vadhaṁ niśamya govinda- rāma-vikrīḍitaṁ param
dīrgha-prajāgaro bhīto durnimittāni durmatiḥ
bahūny acaṣṭobhayathā mṛtyor dautya-karāṇi ca

Wicked King Kaṁsa, on the other hand, was terrified, having heard how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had broken the bow and killed his guards and soldiers, all simply as a game. He remained awake for a long time, and both while awake and while dreaming he saw many bad omens, messengers of death.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was the king of Gokula, having lifted Govardhana (*govindaḥ*). Balarāma had given enjoyment to the cowherd boys by killing Pralamba (*rāma*). They were very strong. Hearing how they had broken the bow as play only (*vi-krīḍatam param*), Kaṁsa became frightened. He saw many bad omens.

He could not sleep at all, or at least for a long time, and remained without closing his eyes (*prajāgaraḥ*). Ever since hearing from Nārada, he had sleepless nights. Or only on that night, he could not sleep at all. Even at this time however, he never stopped thinking of how to harass the devotees (*durmatiḥ*). This was the cause of all his problems. He saw omens, messengers of death. The word *ca* indicates other things also: this means he would also end material existence, since he would attain liberation.

Texts 42.28–31

adarśanaṁ sva-śirasaḥ pratirūpe ca saty api
asaty api dvitīye ca dvai-rūpyaṁ jyotiṣāṁ tathā
chidra-pratītiś chāyāyāṁ prāṇa-ghoṣānupaśrutiḥ
svarṇa-pratītir vṛkṣeṣu sva-padānām adarśanam
svapne preta-pariṣvaṅgaḥ khara-yānaṁ viṣādanam
yāyān nalada-māly ekas tailābhyakto dig-ambaraḥ
anyāni cetthaṁ-bhūtāni svapna-jāgaritāni ca
paśyan maraṇa-santrasto nidrāṁ lebhe na cintayā

When he looked at his reflection, he could not see his head; for no reason the moon and stars appeared double; he saw a hole in his shadow; he could not hear the sound of his life air; trees seemed covered with a golden hue; and he could not see his footprints. He dreamt that he was being embraced by ghosts, riding a donkey and drinking poison, and also that a naked man smeared with oil was passing by wearing a garland of *nalada* flowers. Seeing these and other such omens both while dreaming and while awake, Kaṁsa was terrified by the prospect of death, and out of anxiety he could not sleep.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Three verses (28-30) describe what he saw. He saw double moons and stars in the absence of any obstruction to the eye (such as a finger). Such an omen occurred during the waking state, foreboding death. The word *ādi* indicates other causes such as eye disease. The word *ca* is used twice to indicate that he did not see some things and saw other things. This occurred for the other things he saw as well. He saw his shadow with a hole in it. These he saw while awake. Though he stayed awake a long time, sometimes after great worries he would become exhausted and then saw dreams. Other things he saw while awake and while dreaming.

Text 42.32

vyuṣṭāyāṁ niśi kauravya sūrye cādbhyaḥ samutthite
kārayām āsa vai kaṁso malla-krīḍā-mahotsavam

When the night had finally passed and the sun rose up again from the water, Kaṁsa set about arranging for the grand wrestling festival.

COMMENTARY: When the sun completely rose, Kaṁsa began arranging for the festival, because daylight was best for making arrangements, because he had been lost in thought, or because he was delaying. The wrestling was joyous since it was a method of killing his enemies. He made the festival in order to have the wrestling match. *Vai* means well known. It was actually a method of getting himself killed. Amazed at such foolishness of persons like Duryodhana, Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit (*kauravya*).

Text 42.33

ānarcuḥ puruṣā raṅgaṁ tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire
mañcāś cālaṅkṛtāḥ sragbhiḥ patākā-caila-toraṇaiḥ

The King's men performed the ritual worship of the wrestling arena, sounded their drums and other instruments and decorated the viewing galleries with garlands, flags and arches made of cloth.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The festival is described. Kaṁsa's servants worshipped the wrestling arena (*raṅgam*) by placing auspicious pots, etc.

śvaḥ sacitrāḥ samālyāś ca sapatākās tathaiva ca
suvāsitā vapuṣmanta upanītottaracchadāḥ
kriyantāṁ mañcavāṭāś ca valabhīvīthayas tathā
akṣavāṭe karīṣasya kalpyantāṁ rāśayo 'vyayāḥ
ghaṇṭābharaṇa-śobhāś ca balayaś cānurūpataḥ
sthāpyantāṁ sunikhātāś ca pāna-kumbhā yathākramam
udabhāra-vahāḥ sarve sakāñcana-ghaṭottamāḥ
balayaś copakalpyantāṁ kaṣāyāś caiva kumbhaśaḥ

[Kaṁsa said:] Tomorrow decorate the arena with pictures, garlands, flags, and scent it with perfumes. Cover it with a cloth. Make pavilions, gardens, upper rooms and pathways. Make piles of cow dung in the arena. Decorate the place with bells and lines of unguents as well as pots filled with drinking water dug into the earth. All the pots should be golden, reaching the clouds. Decorate these with unguents. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The flags and gates were to be made of cloth.

Text 42.34

teṣu paurā jānapadā brahma-kṣatra-purogamāḥ
yathopajoṣaṁ viviśū rājānaś ca kṛtāsanāḥ

The city-dwellers and residents of the outlying districts, led by *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas,* came and sat down comfortably in the galleries. The royal guests received special seats.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They sat as they liked (*yathopajoṣam*). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* gives details:

raja-mañceṣu cārūḍhāḥ saha bhṛtyair narādhipāḥ
antaḥpurāṇāṁ mañcāś ca tathānye parikalpitāḥ
anye ca vāra-mukhyānām anye nāgara-yoṣitām
akrūra-vasudevau ca mañca-prānte vyavasthitau
nāgarī-yoṣitāṁ madhye devakī putra-gardhinī

The kings sat in royal pavilions with their servants. There were other pavilions prepared for the women of the palace. There were other pavilions for the important guests and another for the women of the city. Akrūra and Vasudeva were seated in the king's pavilion. Devakī, longing for her son, was seated in the middle of the city women's pavilion.

mañcāgāraiḥ suniryuktair yuddhārthaṁ suvibhūṣitaiḥ
samājavāṭaḥ śuśubhe sa meghaughair ivārṇavaḥ
śreṇīnāṁ ca gaṇānāṁ ca mañcā bhānty acalopamāḥ
antaḥpura-gatānāṁ ca prekṣāgārāṇy adūrataḥ
rejuḥ kāñcana-citrāṇi ratna-jvālākulāni ca
gaṇikānāṁ pṛthaṅ mañcāḥ śubhair āstaraṇāmbaraiḥ śobhitā vāra-mukhyābhir vimāna-pratimaujasaḥ anye ca mañcā bahavaḥ kāṣṭha-saṁcaya-bandhanāḥ
rejuḥ prastaraṇas tatra śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ

The enclosure for the crowds was glorious like an ocean with masses of clouds, with pavilions decorated and constructed for the contest. The pavilion for the masses was like a mountain. The viewing galleries for the

women of the palace, not far away, shone with gold and gems. There were separate pavilions for the courtesans spread with a splendid cloth. The pavilions of important merchants shone like vehicles of the *devatās*. There were other pavilions made of wood, and hundreds and thousands of seats. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Kaṁsa's pavilion was situated first. Kaṁsa made Akrūra and Vasudeva sit there because he was worried about their sentiments and actions which were similar to Devakī's. Devakī entered the women's pavilion because she was anxious for her son. She did not enter the pavilion of the palace women because she did not like Kaṁsa. Special seats were made for the king's guests.

Text 42.35

kaṁsaḥ parivṛto 'mātyai rāja-mañca upāviśat
maṇḍaleśvara-madhya-stho hṛdayena vidūyatā

Surrounded by his ministers, Kaṁsa took his seat on the imperial dais. But even as he sat amidst his various provincial rulers, his heart trembled.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Hari-vaṁśa describes the king's pavilion:

prākhaṁmuś cāru-niryukto meru-śṛṅga-sama-prabhaḥ
rukma-yantra-nibha-stambhaś citra-niryoga-śobhitaḥ
prekṣāgāraḥ sa kaṁsasya pracakāśe 'dhikaṁ śriyā
śobhito mālya-dāmaiś ca nivāsa-kṛta-lakṣaṇaḥ

The pavilion of Kaṁsa facing east was well constructed and shone like the peak of Meru. It had pillars shining like golden yantras and was decorated with pictures. His pavilion, suitable for living, decorated with garlands, shone with the highest beauty.

sa dṛṣṭvā sarva-niryuktaṁ prekṣāgāraṁ nṛpottamaḥ
sottamāgāra-yuktābhir valabhībhir vibhūṣitam
kāñcanībhīr ca pravṛddhābhir eka-stambhaiś ca bhūṣitam
sarvataḥ sāra-nirvyuhaṁ svāyataṁ supratiṣṭhitam

udakpravaṇa-saṁśliṣṭaṁ mañcārohaṇam uttamam
nṛpāsana-parikṣiptaṁ saṁcāra-patha-saṁkulam
channaṁ tad vedikābhiś ca mānavaugha-bhava-kṣayam

Kaṁsa looked at the construction of the pavilion decorated with roofs and the best apartments, with many pillars of one type made of gold. The pavilion had beautiful doors, wide and fixed firmly in all directions. It had steps facing north, a throne, and paths radiating in all directions. It was covered with seats and destroyed *saṁsāra* for all men.

The difference between a *mañca* and a *prekṣāgāra* is that the *mañca* had less covering and the *prekṣāgāra* had elaborate coverings. He was seated among the provincial rulers so that rulers could serve him. Others were friendly kings. Or Kaṁsa was seated in one pavilion, which was surrounded by those of other kings. Kaṁsa's heart trembled since he was in continual fear, having seen the bad omens.

Text 42.36

vādyamānesu tūryeṣu malla-tālottareṣu ca
mallāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ dṛptāḥ sopādhyāyāḥ samāsata

While the musical instruments loudly played and the wrestlers kept the rhythm by slapping their arms, the lavishly ornamented wrestlers proudly entered the arena with their coaches and sat down.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Not only did instruments sound, but the wrestlers kept the beat by slapping their arms. This could be heard distinctly (*uttareṣu*) above the sound of the instruments. This indicated the great strength of the wrestlers. Or outside the arena ordinary instruments sounded while inside the wrestlers kept the beat since the wrestlers were very proud (*dṛptāḥ*). They entered without feeling shy (*sam-āsata*).

Text 42.37

cāṇūro muṣṭikaḥ kūtaḥ śalas tośala eva ca
ta āsedur upasthānaṁ valgu-vādya-praharṣitāḥ

Enthused by the pleasing music, Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośala sat down on the wrestling mat.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The wrestlers came to the wrestling area where they worshipped Kaṁsa (*upasthānam*). These wrestlers came and even (*eva*) their students came, along with their umpires (*ca*). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *mallaḥ prāśnika-vargaś ca raṅga-madhye samīpagaḥ*: the wrestler and his coaches entered the arena. These coaches encouraged the wrestlers by applauding them.

Text 42.38

nanda-gopādayo gopā bhoja-rāja-samāhutāḥ
niveditopāyanās ta ekasmin mañca āviśan

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherds, summoned by the King of the Bhojas, presented him with their offerings and then took their seats in one of the galleries.

COMMENTARY: The elder cowherds were respectfully called by Kaṁsa, who dispatched Akrūra and other Bhoja relatives to invite them. On their own, they did not want to enter, being in anxiety because of the breaking of the bow. He called them to pacify them, so that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would start fighting in the wrestling matches. It should be understood that by the will of Kṛṣṇa they were first brought to the spot when he killed the elephant, and then entered the wrestling arena. The cowherds all sat in one gallery, not separate galleries. Vasudeva was seated at the front of that gallery. That is stated later. The cowherds who were not Kṛṣṇa's companions were seated there. The cowherd boys went with Kṛṣṇa. This is mentioned later. *vṛtau gopaiḥ katipayaiḥ*: he was surrounded by some cowherd friends. (SB 10.43.16)

Chapter Forty-three
Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

Text 43.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
atha kṛṣṇaś ca rāmaś ca kṛta-śaucau parantapa
malla-dundubhi-nirghoṣaṁ śrutvā draṣṭum upeyatuḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O chastiser of enemies, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, having executed all necessary purification, then heard the kettledrums resounding at the wrestling arena, and they went there to see what was happening.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates auspiciousness. The two boys would kill the demons. Or after Nanda had been called, it was not proper to go to the demons accompanied by his dear devotees. Or since they had gone, he should go there quickly. He attracted the hearts of his devotees with his desire to kill the demons (*kṛṣṇaḥ*). Balarāma gave enjoyment to his friends (*rāmaḥ*). Though Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first because he was the main person in all cases, still because Balarāma was eager to kill demons, the repetition of the word *ca* indicates they were equally prominent. Because he went with his younger brother out of affection and followed his will, he is given equal status. Hearing the loud noise from the drums and wrestlers, they went to see the match. They went without wrestlers' dress, very gently, to fool the elephant trainer and others. O destroyer of enemies (*parantapa*)! This was proper for killing the enemies. You have a similar nature.

Text 43.2

raṅga-dvāraṁ samāsādya tasmin nāgam avasthitam
apaśyat kuvalayāpīḍaṁ kṛṣṇo 'mbaṣṭha-pracoditam

When Kṛṣṇa reached the entrance to the arena, he saw the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa blocking his way at the urging of his keeper.

COMMENTARY: Coming near the entrance, he saw the elephant standing there alertly, goaded by the keeper on his shoulder to kill Kṛṣṇa. He

approached the elephant to kill it with care, while being attractive to all hearts (*kṛṣṇaḥ*).

Text 43.3

baddhvā parikaraṁ śauriḥ samuhya kuṭilālakān
uvāca hastipaṁ vācā megha-nāda-gabhīrayā

Securely binding up his sash and tying back his curly locks, Kṛṣṇa addressed the elephant-keeper with words as grave as the rumbling of a cloud.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In order to give bliss to the dynasties of warriors, he now acted like a warrior (*śauriḥ*). Taking off his jacket, he bound a sash around his *dhoti* and put on a long garland over his shoulders. This garland will be described in verse 19. Previously his naturally curly long hair had been combed and hidden beneath a shining turban. At this time, he bound his locks tightly with his upper cloth for fear that they would be scattered while wrestling. Another version with *samūhya* instead of *samuhya* is poetic license. It was proper to completely bind his locks since in killing the wicked there should be nothing blocking his face (and thus the demons would derive benefit from seeing his beauty). According to Śrīdhara Svāmī he put on his cloth and then tied up the cloth (*baddhvā parikāram*) since it had fallen out of place. Or, *baddhvā parikāram* can mean "he put on the cloth."

Text 43.4

ambaṣṭhāmbaṣṭha mārgaṁ nau dehy apakrama mā ciram
no cet sa-kuñjaraṁ tvādya nayāmi yama-sādanam

[Kṛṣṇa said:] O driver, driver, move aside at once and let us pass! If you don't, this very day I will send both you and your elephant to the abode of Yamarāja!

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa addressed the elephant keeper twice, in order to make clear his determination, or to express his anger. He spoke to indicate that blocking the road was a great offense. Move off the road immediately (*apakrama*). If you do not, then immediately I will send you to your death.

The present tense indicates "right now." *Kuñjaram* means "he who crumbles the earth (*ku*) with his tusks and weight." This indicates the elephant's strength.

Text 43.5

evaṁ nirbhartsito 'mbaṣṭhaḥ kupitaḥ kopitaṁ gajam
codayām āsa kṛṣṇāya kālāntaka-yamopamam

Thus threatened, the elephant-keeper became angry. He goaded his furious elephant, who appeared equal to time, death and Yamarāja, into attacking Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The elephant became angry because of Kṛṣṇa's words or because of the trainer who knew how to agitate the elephant. The trainer urged the elephant to attack Kṛṣṇa, who attracts by his form as time. The elephant, who was death inflicting, met Kṛṣṇa, who was death inflicting.

Text 43.6

karīndras tam abhidrutya kareṇa tarasāgrahīt
karād vigalitaḥ so 'muṁ nihatyāṅghriṣv alīyata

The lord of the elephants charged Kṛṣṇa and violently seized him with his trunk. But Kṛṣṇa slipped away, struck him a blow and disappeared from his view among his legs.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa allowed the elephant to grab him using his trunk, since Kṛṣṇa was capable of doing anything out of great curiosity. This will be understood later by the words *līlayā* and *krīḍayā.*

He skillfully escaped (*vi-galitaḥ*) from the elephant, without putting his garland or cloth in disarray. This is explained later. He went between the elephant's four legs and became invisible.

Text 43.7

saṅkruddhas tam acakṣāṇo ghrāṇa-dṛṣṭiḥ sa keśavam
parāmṛśat puṣkareṇa sa prasahya vinirgataḥ

Infuriated at being unable to see Keśava, the elephant sought him out with his sense of smell. Once again Kuvalayāpīḍa seized him with the end of his trunk, only to have the Lord forcefully free himself.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Puṣkareṇa means "by the trunk" but also hints that his trunk became soft like a lotus (*puṣkara*) on contacting Kṛṣṇa's beautiful limbs.

Text 43.8

pucche pragṛhyāti-balaṁ dhanuṣaḥ pañca-viṁśatim
vicakarṣa yathā nāgaṁ suparṇa iva līlayā

Kṛṣṇa then grabbed the powerful Kuvalayāpīḍa by the tail and playfully dragged him twenty-five bow-lengths as easily as Garuḍa might drag a snake.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He dragged the elephant just as (*yathā*) Garuḍa drags a snake. Or, he dragged him such that the elephant could not remain in one place at all (*yathā*).

Text 43.9

sa paryāvartamānena savya-dakṣiṇato 'cyutaḥ
babhrāma bhrāmyamāṇena go-vatseneva bālakaḥ

As Kṛṣṇa held on to the elephant's tail, the animal tried to twist away to the left and to the right, making the Lord swerve in the opposite direction, as a young boy would swerve when pulling a calf by the tail.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa at no time stopped grasping his tail (*acyutaḥ*). Or he was motionless, like a circle made by a firebrand going left and right because of the quick movements of the elephant.

Text 43.10

tato 'bhimukham abhyetya pāṇināhatya vāraṇam
prādravan pātayām āsa spṛśyamānaḥ pade pade

Kṛṣṇa then came face to face with the elephant, slapped him and chased him. Touched by the elephant, Kṛṣṇa made him trip and fall.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After being dragged around, Kṛṣṇa faced the elephant and slapped him only slightly. Otherwise the elephant would have died instantly. The elephant could not run away since he was in great pain. Kṛṣṇa let the elephant touch him to encourage the elephant. Otherwise he would have given up and run away and Kṛṣṇa would not have had much fun.

Text 43.11

sa dhāvan kṛīdayā bhūmau patitvā sahasotthitaḥ
tam matvā patitaṁ kruddho dantābhyāṁ so 'hanat kṣitim

As Kṛṣṇa dodged about, he playfully fell on the ground and quickly got up again. The raging elephant, thinking Kṛṣṇa was down, tried to gore him with his tusks but struck the earth instead.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He made the elephant fall and then after running, Kṛṣṇa fell down. He quickly got up in such a way that the elephant did not even notice that he got up. The elephant fell to its knees and dug its tusks into the earth. *Hari-vaṁśa* says *papāta bhūmiṁ jānubhyāṁ daśanābhyāṁ tutoda ca*: the elephant fell on its knees and tried to attack Kṛṣṇa with its tusks.

Text 43.12

sva-vikrame pratihate kuñjarendro 'ty-amarṣitaḥ
codyamāno mahāmātraiḥ kṛṣṇam abhyadravad ruṣā

His prowess foiled, the lordly elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa went into a frenzied rage out of frustration. But the elephant-keepers goaded him on, and he furiously charged Kṛṣṇa once again.

COMMENTARY: His prowess was thwarted (*pratihate*) or his prowess was destroyed by the Lord's cleverness. The elephant by nature was angry, but now reached the height of anger. Urged on by his trainers, he rushed towards Kṛṣṇa in intense anger. All the trainers at this time participated in agitating the elephant. He quickly rushed at Kṛṣṇa who attracted him.

Text 43.13

tam āpatantam āsādya bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ
nigṛhya pāṇinā hastaṁ pātayām āsa bhū-tale

The Supreme Lord, the killer of the demon Madhu, confronted the elephant as he attacked. Seizing his trunk with one hand, Kṛṣṇa threw him to the ground.

COMMENTARY: He had killed Madhu, the first demon. Thus he was very strong. By his will, he could kill the elephant. But he is described as most astonishing with sweetness: he displayed his powers as the Lord in fighting (*bhagavān*). Or though he was the killer of Madhu, he was Bhagavān. Thus with his hand he held the elephant's trunk constantly, or held it tightly and threw the elephant to the ground. This was a greater feat than killing Madhu.

Text 43.14

patitasya padākramya mṛgendra iva līlayā
dantam utpāṭya tenebhaṁ hastipāṁś cāhanad dhariḥ

Kṛṣṇa then climbed onto the elephant with the ease of a mighty lion, pulled out a tusk, and with it killed the beast and his keepers.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

When the elephant fell down (*patitam tam* – in another version), he climbed its head with his foot. This version has *patitasya:* he climbed on the elephant with his foot and uprooted the tusks of the fallen elephant. He is called Hari because he took away (*hari*) the life of the elephant like a lion and assumed a form like a lion (*hari*) in killing it.

Text 43.15

mṛtakaṁ dvipam utsṛjya danta-pāṇiḥ samāviśat
aṁsa-nyasta-viṣāṇo ’sṛṅ- mada-bindubhir aṅkitaḥ
virūḍha-sveda-kaṇikā vadanāmburuho babhau

Leaving the dead elephant aside, Kṛṣṇa held on to the tusk and entered the wrestling arena. With the tusk resting on his shoulder, drops of the elephant’s blood and sweat sprinkled all over him, and his lotus face covered with fine drops of his own perspiration, the Lord shone with great beauty.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He held one tusk in his left hand and Balarāma pulled out the other tusk since it is mentioned in the next verse that they held the tusks as weapons. He slightly entered the gate of the arena (*āviśat*) with special beauty, walking like an intoxicated elephant (*sam*). His face was ornamented with drops of blood as if he had been painted and had drops of perspiration appearing colorfully or excellently (*vi—rūḍha*). Since it is impossible for transformations (such as perspiration) to occur in a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, such unlimited qualities appear and disappear according to pastimes. His face was like a lotus that became beautiful with drops of water on it.

Text 43.16

vṛtau gopaiḥ katipayair baladeva-janārdanau
raṅgaṁ viviśatū rājan gaja-danta-varāyudhau

My dear King, Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa, each carrying one of the elephant’s tusks as his chosen weapon, entered the arena with several cowherd boys.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

To reinforce the previous verse, a further description is added. Some of Kṛṣṇa’s close friends from Gokula had come along with elders such as Nanda. Balarāma manifested special power at this moment to kill the wicked, out of affection for his younger brother. Devotees like Nārada (*jana*) had requested (*ardana*) that Kṛṣṇa kill Kaṁsa. Śukadeva calls out to

Parīkṣit in joy “O King!” They put the tusks on their shoulders as the best weapons to kill Kaṁsa and to instill fear in him. Or they put the best elephant tusks on their shoulders as weapons.

Text 43.17

mallānām aśanir nṛṇāṁ nara-varaḥ strīṇāṁ smaro mūrtimān
gopānāṁ sva-jano ’satāṁ kṣiti-bhujāṁ śāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣāṁ tattvaṁ paraṁ yoginām
vṛṣṇīnāṁ para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when he entered it with his elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord’s universal form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable deity.

COMMENTARY: Śrīdhara Svāmī says that here Kṛṣṇa is described as the conglomeration of all *rasas* since he is both the cause of *rasa* and its effect. *Śruti* says *raso vai saḥ rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhānandī bhavati:* the Lord is *rasa,* and attaining that *rasa* one attains bliss. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*) The particulars are as follows. The wrestlers, who were proud, thinking themselves the best of warriors, became angry because Kṛṣṇa, whose limbs were like thunderbolts and who acted with disregard, disrespected those who were also like thunderbolts, and in this state entered the arena. The wrestlers exhibited *krodha-sthāyi-bhāva* and *raudra-rasa.*

The citizens of Mathurā, other than the wicked and Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, on seeing his extraordinary pastimes, were amazed. They exhibited *vismaya-sthāyi-bhāva* and *adbhuta-rasa.* The women of Mathurā, other than the elder women, manifested *rati* while thinking of him as their beloved. They exhibited *priyatā-sthāyi-bhāva* and *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. His friends of the same age such as Śrīdāmā exhibited *hāsa-sthāyi-bhāva* and *hāysa-rasa* on seeing with unrestricted hearts his extraordinary costume decorated with the elephant’s blood and *mada*. The wicked kings saw him as a punisher. They experienced the *sthāyi-bhāva* called *utsāha* and *vīrya-rasa* on seeing his extreme courage. Devakī and Vasudeva or Vasudeva and Nanda (*pitroḥ*)

and others as well having similar sentiments experienced *śoka-sthāyi-bhava* and *karuṇa-rasa,* worrying about the evil intentions of the wrestlers, since they thought his body was soft because they saw him as a baby. The word *dayā* also indicates this *rasa*. Kaṁsa saw him as the cause of his death. This is the *bhaya-sthāyī-bhāva* and *bhayānaka-rasa.* The ignorant experienced *jugupsa-sthāyī-bhāva* and *bībatsa-rasa* (disgust), since they thought he was a material, imperfect person, even though the wise understood him to have a body of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Devotees with a mixture of *jñāna* saw him as the *param brahman,* and experienced *śānta-sthāyī* and *śānta-rasa. Śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ: śama* means fixing the intelligence in me. (SB 11.19.36) Thus *śānta-rasa* means being fixed in Kṛṣṇa with peacefulness. *Śānta* refers to that affection which takes shelter of his *svarūpa* while there is an absence of all material desires, possessing affection for him while at the same time having an absence of more intense *bhāvas* like *dāsya* or *sakhya.* He was most worshipable for the Vṛṣṇis. He produced *sa-prema-bhakti (dāsya).* This means that they had *bhakti* with knowledge of him as being worshippable. *Prema-bhakti* was their *sthāyi-bhāva.* This is called *sa-prema-bhakti* in Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary.

raudro 'dbhūtah śucir atha priya-yukta-hāsyo vīro 'tha vatsala-yutaḥ
karuṇo bhayāṅkaḥ
bībhatsa-saṁjña udito 'tha thaiva śāntaḥ prītas tathā daśa-rasād viyutāḥ
krameṇa

There are ten *rasas* listed: *raudra, adbhuta, śṛṅgāra, hāsya* with *sakhya, vīra, karuṇa* with *vatsala, bhayānaka, bībhatsa, śānta* and *dāsya.*

Śuci means *śṛṅgāra*, *priya* means *preyo-rasa*. *Bhayāṅkaḥ* means *bhayānaka-rasa.*

sthāyibhāvo vibhāvānubhāvaiś ca vyabhicāribhiḥ
svādyatvaṁ nīyamāno sau rsa itiy abhidhīyate
kāraṇānyatha kāryāṇi sahakārīṇi yānica
tāny eva vyapadiṣyante vibhāvādipadai rase
ālambanoddpipaākhye vibhāvasya bhide ubhe
ālamano 'pi dvividho viṣayāśraya bhedataḥ
rasasya viṣayaḥ kṛṣṇas tasyānubhavitāśrayaḥ

uddipano bahuvidhaḥ prāgalbhyaṁ vikramo hareḥ
saundarya-guṇa-saurabhya-nūpura-svanitādikaḥ
anubhāvaph sāttvikāḥ syur āṅgikādyāś a te dvidhā
stambhaḥ svodo ’tha romāñcaḥ svarabhedaś ca vepathuḥ
vaivarṇyam āśru pralaya ity aṣṭau sāttivkāḥ smrtāḥ
burbhaṅgaḥ kuṭilekṣa ca bhujāsphālana-nartanam
varokti śvāsa-bhūmādhyāḥ kathitāāṅgikādayaḥ
nirvedādyās trayastriṁśat kahyante vhaibcārinḥ
sthāyinaṁ varddhayanto ye prādurantarbhavanti ca
krud vismayao ratirhāsotsāhau śugbhīr jugupsitam
sthāyino amī raseṣv aṣṭau hñeyā raudṛadbhūtādiṣu
priyatā-sakhya-vātsalya-śānti-prītaya ity ataḥ
pāñcavidhyad iha rate sthāyino dvādaśoditāḥ
śuddasattvaviśesātmā premasūryācusāmyabhāk
rucibhiś cittamāśṛṇya kṛd asau ratir ucyate
sa mukhyā-gauṇa-bhedena kathito dvividho rasaḥ
śṛṅāro tra tathā preyān vatsalaḥ śānta ity asau
prītaś ca pañcadhā mukho rateḥ śreṣṭhyenaaud mukhyatā
rudro dbhūtas tathā hāsyo vīraḥ karuṇa-bhīṣaṇau
bībhatsaḥ sapta gauṇāḥsyuḥ krodāderṣadihonnatiḥ

The *rasas* have been summarized. Since his limbs were like thunderbolts, beings most brilliantly shining, he was the object (*viṣaya*) of anger. The wrestlers who insulted him were the *āśraya. Krodha* or anger means to have a burning heart because of greatly disrespecting another person. This was their *sthāyi-bhāva*. The Lord, known as the shelter of extraordinary form, and pastimes, is the *viṣaya* of *vismaya-rasa*. The citizens of Mathurā who were generally favorable were the *āśrayas* of this *rasa*. Expansion of the heart by seeing something astonishing is called *vismaya.* That is the *sthāyi-bhāva.* In *śṛṅgāra*, he is known as more beautiful than a million Cupids. He is the *viṣaya* and the young women are the *āśrayas*. This becomes the cause of enjoyment. The *sthāyī* is called *priyatā.* Carrying the elephant’s tusk and dressed in an unusual manner, he became the object of laughter for friends. Śrīdāmā and others were the *āśrayas.* When the heart blossoms on seeing his dress, it is called *hāsya-sthāyī*. When he is known as an equal in age, among friends, he is the *viśaya* of *sakhya*

(preyo). Śrīdāmā and others are the *āśraya.* The *rati* is devoid of reverence and mercy, and has familiarity. *Sakhya* is the *sthāyī*. The cowherd boys have *hāsya* and *sakhya.*

When he is known as being courageous, because of having all weapons, he is the *viṣaya* of *utsāha.*

Kaṁsa's friends are the *āśraya. Utsāha* is the *sthāyī*. There is a desire to fight fiercely on seeing bravery.

When he is known as a child, in great danger, he is the *viṣaya* of lamentation (*śoka*). Parents are the *āśraya. Śoka* is the *sthāyī.* Pain is experienced on knowing that the child is in danger. When he is seen as one's son, he is the *viṣaya* of *vātsalya.* Parents are the *āśrayas*. One shows compassion for Kṛṣṇa. The *sthāyī* is *vātsalyam*. Parents have both *karuṇa* and *vātsalya.*

When he is seen as death and most terrifying, he is the *viṣaya* of *bhaya* (fear). Kaṁsa and others are the *āśrayas,* having offended him and being fearful of him. Fear means a heart agitated by offense or seeing something terrifying. That is the *sthāyī.*

When he is seen as disgusting with perspiration and blood, he is the object of *jugupsa*. Ignorant people are the *āśrayas*. Though the Lord is most beautiful, demons perceive him as disgusting. When the heart closes with such feelings it is called *jugupsa-sthāyī.*

When he is known as Paramātmā, with a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, he is the object of *śānta. Yogīs* are the *āśrayas. Śānti* is the *rati*, with qualities like *śama.*

When he is known as the master, since he is the supreme deity, he is the object of *prīti*. Uddhava, Akrūra and others are the *āśrayas.* The *rati* has respect (*sambhrama-gaurava*). The *sthāyī* is called *prīti.*

Each *rasa* has its *uddīpanas, anubhāvas,* etc. For fear of too large a work, these are not explained.

The cowherd boys have *preyo-rasa.* The parents have *vatsala-rasa.* That is clear. However, Śrīdhara Svāmī does not mention these two *rasas* in analyzing the different persons with *rasas* in the verse since they are rare and correspond with *hāsya* and *karuṇa.*

Some say that the listeners develop *hāsya-rasa* on seeing the Lord, whose toenails are worshipped by Brahmā, acting as the friend of the cowherd boys. And though the Lord is full of all powers, when seen as imperfect by the ignorant, the listeners develop *bībhatsa-rasa*. But that is not correct. Moreover, *raudra, vīra, bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa rasas* are actually *rasābhāsa* in this verse, since they are not related to *rati.* (The demons have no love for the Lord.) The *rasas* are explained clearly in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu.*

Text 43.18

hataṁ kuvalayāpīḍaṁ dṛṣṭvā tāv api durjayau
kaṁso manasy api tadā bhṛśam udvivije nṛpa

When Kaṁsa saw that Kuvalayāpīḍa was dead and the two brothers were invincible, he was overwhelmed with anxiety, O King.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though the elephant was killed outside the arena, when Kaṁsa mounted the high gallery he could see that the elephant had been killed. He understood the two boys were invincible by seeing that they had killed the elephant and manifested great power. Though Kaṁsa was a powerful fighter, he became disturbed because they showed no fear in facing Kaṁsa. Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in joy, since Kaṁsa was now unsettled in mind.

Text 43.19

tau rejatū raṅga-gatau mahā-bhujau
vicitra-veṣābharaṇa-srag-ambarau
yathā naṭāv uttama-veṣa-dhāriṇau
manaḥ kṣipantau prabhayā nirīkṣatām

Arrayed with variegated ornaments, garlands and garments, just like a pair of excellently costumed actors, the two mighty-armed Lords shone splendidly in the arena, agitating the minds of all onlookers with their beauty.

COMMENTARY: When they entered the arena, they appeared very beautiful. Their huge arms represent the attractiveness and strength of other limbs

also. They had a variegated or astonishing appearance, ornaments, garlands, and manner of dressing. Everyone's minds were attracted by their beauty by looking at them on the road or secretly. Or they were like actors wearing astonishing ornaments and dress. Ordinary actors could not be compared.

Text 43.20

nirīkṣya tāv uttama-pūruṣau janā
mañca-sthitā nāgara-rāṣṭrakā nṛpa
praharṣa-vegotkalitekṣaṇānanāḥ
papur na tṛptā nayanais tad-ānanam

O King, as the citizens of the city and the people from outlying districts gazed upon those two lords from their seats in the galleries, the force of the people's happiness caused their eyes to open wide and their faces to blossom. They drank in the vision of the Lords' faces without becoming satiated.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The ordinary people, other than those who were hostile, developed the highest *prema,* what to speak of those persons with devotion. That is explained in this verse. The two were endowed with the greatest beauty and grace (*uttama-pūruṣau*). Seated in the galleries, the residents of Mathurā and citizens of the province (*rāṣṭrakāḥ*) all saw him clearly. With their eyes opened wide with joy, they drank the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face, the abode of sweetness and beauty, using their eyes as cups. Only the face is mentioned, comparing the face to nectar, since it was the main element of beauty.

Texts 43.21–22

pibanta iva cakṣurbhyāṁ lihanta iva jihvayā
jighranta iva nāsābhyāṁ śliṣyanta iva bāhubhiḥ
ūcuḥ parasparaṁ te vai yathā-dṛṣṭaṁ yathā-śrutam
tad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhurya- prāgalbhya-smāritā iva

The people seemed to be drinking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with their eyes, licking them with their tongues, smelling them with their nostrils and embracing them with their arms. Reminded of the Lords' beauty, character, charm and bravery, the members of the audience began describing these features to one another according to what they had seen and heard.

COMMENTARY: They drank them with their eyes. Absorbed in seeing them, they did nothing else. They seemed to drink, since drinking their forms was actually impossible. They licked him (kissed him) or touched him, tasting him with their tongues. They embraced him firmly with their many arms (instead of two arms). They developed four arms because of the sweetness, or many people had many arms. They became absorbed in him using their knowledge senses. This indicates their intense love for the boys. Seeing him in front of them, they used their eyes, tongues and noses. They did not use their ears to hear him. Or speaking about him (*ucuḥ*) indicates *kīrtana.* The four are in order of increasing importance (ending with embracing). Smelling is superior to tasting, since in smelling one can relish all his limbs and garland at once.

Vai means well known or clear. Because of fear of Kaṁsa for a long time, they did not remember. By seeing Krṣṇa and Balarāma's forms, they remembered their greatness. They remembered their beauty (*rūpa*) and qualities. Sweetness and bravery are included in their beauty and qualities but are mentioned separately because of their outstanding nature.

Actually, living in Mathurā they never forgot the two boys, but now they had similarity to remembrance. *Pragalbhyam* can also mean the absence of fear or having all skills. Thus they described their beauty, qualities, skills and greatness.

Text 43.23

etau bhagavataḥ sākṣād dharer nārāyaṇasya hi
avatīrṇāv ihāṁśena vasudevasya veśmani

[The people said:] These two boys are certainly expansions of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa who have descended to this world in the home of Vasudeva.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Eight verses (23-24) describe what they said. They have appeared as direct portions of the Lord who by his very nature is endowed with all powers (*bhagavataḥ*), who is attractive with all desirables and takes away all suffering (*hareḥ*), since he is the shelter of all *jīvas (nārāyaṇasya*). They are not *śaktyāveśa* forms. Thus they will bestow all desirables. They have now appeared in Mathurā (*iha*) and in the house of Vasudeva. This shows the Lord's favor towards the people of Mathurā. They have appeared in the house of Vasudeva, not born from a womb, since they cannot undergo material transformations as expansions of Nārāyaṇa. Another hidden meaning is: they have appeared in the house of Vasudeva who is a portion of the Lord, since the Lord is endowed with all powers.

Text 43.24

eṣa vai kila devakyāṁ jāto nītaś ca gokulam
kālam etaṁ vasan gūḍho vavṛdhe nanda-veśmani

This one [Kṛṣṇa] took birth from mother Devakī and was brought to Gokula, where he has remained concealed all this time, growing up in the house of Nanda.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The people spoke of the two boys generally, describing their qualities in order to show that they were the Supreme Lords. Now they speak of Kṛṣṇa as the chief person in six verses (24-29). *Vai* indicates that he is famous as appearing from Devakī. That person is the person standing before us now (*eṣaḥ*). *Kila* indicates certainty. Until this time (*kālam etam*) he has lived secretly in Nanda's house and grown up there.

Text 43.25

pūtanānena nītāntaṁ cakravātaś ca dānavaḥ
arjunau guhyakaḥ keśī dhenuko 'nye ca tad-vidhāḥ

He made Pūtanā and the whirlwind demon meet with death, pulled down the twin Arjuna trees and killed Śaṅkhacūḍa, Keśī, Dhenuka and

similar demons.

COMMENTARY: *Antam* means destruction.

Texts 43.26–27

gāvaḥ sa-pālā etena dāvāgneḥ parimocitāḥ
kāliyo damitaḥ sarpa indraś ca vimadaḥ kṛtaḥ
saptāham eka-hastena dhṛto 'dri-pravaro 'munā
varṣa-vātāśanibhyaś ca paritrātaṁ ca gokulam

He saved the cows and the cowherds from a forest fire and subdued the serpent Kāliya. He removed Indra's false pride by holding up the best of mountains with one hand for an entire week, thus protecting the inhabitants of Gokula from rain, wind and hail.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Sarpa means a creature that moves here and there (*sarpati*). He was able to control the snake by dancing on its heads. That snake was famous as Kāliya, having great poison. The method of destroying Indra's pride is described: he held up the mountain for seven days with one hand. The first *ca* indicates that he protected them from rain, wind, hail, etc. The second *ca* indicates that he performed other related acts such as being enthroned as king of the cows.

Text 43.28

gopyo 'sya nitya-mudita- hasita-prekṣaṇaṁ mukham
paśyantyo vividhāṁs tāpāṁs taranti smāśramaṁ mudā

Because of joy, the *gopīs* easily overcame all kinds of distress by seeing his face, which was always cheerful with smiling glances.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Some women with special *bhāva* speak this verse. The *gopīs* saw his face which could be seen with smiles filled with constant joy. Or they saw his face with beautiful glances which were endowed with constant, joyful smiles. Or they constantly (*nityam*) saw his face visible with smiles (*udita-*

hasita). Easily (*aśramam*) they crossed over suffering (*taranti sma*). They are not like us who have a bad fortune. They speak with humility. Or, *sma* indicates that it is well known. Rather than the past tense, the present tense (they overcome) is used since it was possible that Kṛṣṇa could not return to Vraja. The *gopīs* suffered various miseries such as mental anguish because of being scolded by their husbands, or the pain of separation. The *rāsa* dance is also indicated.

Text 43.29

vadanty anena vaṁśo 'yaṁ yadoḥ su-bahu-viśrutaḥ
śriyaṁ yaśo mahatvaṁ ca lapsyate parirakṣitaḥ

It is said that under his full protection the Yadu dynasty will become extremely famous and attain wealth, glory and power.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They now speak of the pastimes that he would perform in Mathurā. Those who know scriptures say that the Yadu dynasty will gain wealth, fame, and utmost excellence (*mahatvam*).

Text 43.30

ayaṁ cāsyāgrajaḥ śrīmān āmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ
pralambo nihato yena vatsako ye bakādayaḥ

This lotus-eyed elder brother, Balarāma, is the proprietor of all beauty. He has killed Pralamba, Vatsaka, Baka and other demons.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Now they describe the pastimes of Balarāma. He is addressed as *śrīmān,* endowed with all beauty, since he is elder. They become greedy because of the beauty of his eyes: he had lotus eyes. *Vatsaka* here indicates that Balarāma killed a demon similar to Vatsāsura, since Kṛṣṇa killed *Vatsāsura.* Killing a cow is a fault but, in this case, there was no fault. This is indicated by the suffix *ka* in *vatsakaḥ*. *Ive pratikrtāu*: the suffix *ka* indicates "like this" to express an imitation. (*Pāṇini* 5.3.96) The word *adayaḥ* indicates the relatives of Dhenuka. They recite the demons' names in the opposite order

of their killing since their information depended on what they had heard and seen, with lack of true knowledge.

Text 43.31

janeṣv evaṁ bruvāṇeṣu tūryeṣu ninadatsu ca
kṛṣṇa-rāmau samābhāṣya cāṇūro vākyam abravīt

While the people talked in this way and the musical instruments resounded, the wrestler Cāṇūra addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with the following words.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

While they were speaking in this way out of joy, their incomplete statements were interrupted by the sounds of instruments. These talks showed that it was impossible to stop them from speaking since they were the majority and indicated that their words were true. The sound of the instruments indicated the envy the wrestlers had for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The music sounded continuously (*ninadatsu*), showing the wrestlers' enthusiasm for fighting. Addressing the boys, the wrestlers spoke. Cāṇūra spoke words. The sentence indicates that he would speak something important—he would speak cruel words. Or *vākyam* can mean *avākyam* (*cānuraḥ avakyam abravīt)*. Cāṇūra spoke unsuitable words.

Text 43.32

he nanda-sūno he rāma bhavantau vīra-sammatau
niyuddha-kuśalau śrutvā rājñāhūtau didṛkṣuṇā

[Cāṇūra said:] O son of Nanda, O Rāma, you two are well respected as being courageous and are both skillful at wrestling. Having heard of your prowess, the King has called you here, wanting to see for himself.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He addressed them. O son of Nanda! O Rāma! By addressing Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda he indicates that Nanda was his true father. He addressed Balarāma as Rāma, meaning that he gave pleasure to all people, to encourage him to fight. But the wrestler intended to show the low birth of

Kṛṣṇa from a cowherd family and by not mentioning Balarāma's lineage, indicate that his parentage was not known, in order to take away their glory by mocking them. You are respected by men as being courageous. The king has heard you are skillful at wrestling. He wants to see you wrestle. Since the king wants to see, you must be qualified. Thus you should participate in this fight. Because of the contrary meaning of the words, his statement is meant to mock them.

Text 43.33

priyaṁ rājñaḥ prakurvantyaḥ śreyo vindanti vai prajāḥ
manasā karmaṇā vācā viparītam ato 'nyathā

Subjects of the King who try to please him with their thoughts, acts and words are sure to achieve good fortune, but those who fail to do so will suffer the opposite fate.

COMMENTARY: To do the opposite is not proper. Pleasing the king by mind, acts, and words brings the best results (*śreyaḥ*). The citizens must please the king. *Vai* means well known. Or because (*vai*) pleasing the king brings the best results, you have been called. Not pleasing the king (*anyathā*) brings the opposite results.

Text 43.34

nityaṁ pramuditā gopā vatsa-pālā yathā-sphuṭam
vaneṣu malla-yuddhena krīḍantaś cārayanti gāḥ

It is well known that cowherd boys are always joyful as they tend their calves, and that the boys playfully wrestle with each other while grazing their animals in the various forests.

COMMENTARY: "But cowherds like us do not know such things, since we constantly herd cows." The cowherds protect the cows. They clearly play. Even those who herd the calves play. Or *gā* refers to cows and related animals (calves). The cowherds start by herding calves and play. That is clear.

Text 43.35

tasmād rājñaḥ priyaṁ yūyaṁ vayaṁ ca karavāma he
bhūtāni naḥ prasīdanti sarva-bhūta-mayo nṛpaḥ

Therefore let's do what the king wants. Everyone will be pleased with us, for the king embodies all living beings.

COMMENTARY: "But we should wrestle with cowherds." This verse answers. You should wrestle with us to please the king. All *jīvas* will be pleased with us, since the king represents all *jīvas*—they all depend on him. By fighting, you two, who are his subjects, will protect all beings. Do not fear. Let us please the king. In pleasing him, all beings will be pleased with us.

Text 43.36

tan niśamyābravīt kṛṣṇo deśa-kālocitaṁ vacaḥ
niyuddham ātmano 'bhīṣṭaṁ manyamāno 'bhinandya ca

Hearing this, Kṛṣṇa, who liked to wrestle and welcomed the challenge, replied with words appropriate to the time and place.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa spoke skillful words suitable to the circumstance. Or at that time, at that place, he spoke such words, though they were not actually true. He welcomed the fight or the words of Cānūra, praising them by saying "Excellent!" since he was skillful at answering by his nature, or did this to increase his enthusiasm to fight.

Text 43.37

prajā bhoja-pater asya vayaṁ cāpi vane-carāḥ
karavāma priyaṁ nityaṁ tan naḥ param anugrahaḥ

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Although forest-dwellers, we are also subjects of the Bhoja king. We must gratify his desires, for such behavior will confer upon us the greatest benefit.

COMMENTARY: We are the subjects of this person (*asya)* who harms our relatives and does violence against the citizens and we wander in the forest. Because he is the king of the Bhojas, it is not proper that we are his subjects, since we live in the forest. But let that be. Let us accept that you and we are his subjects. We should please him and he will be purely (*param*) merciful to us, since we are not worthy. This means that, without

cause, he will be merciful. The cause (or lack of cause) and the bestowal of mercy are both expressed in the word *anugrahaḥ.*

Another meaning is this. Since he does not protect the citizens, and harms our relatives as a king, we are not his citizens. Even so, we will please him. If we are merciful to him, he will die.

Text 43.38

bālā vayaṁ tulya-balaiḥ krīḍiṣyāmo yathocitam
bhaven niyuddhaṁ mādharmaḥ spṛśen malla-sabhā-sadaḥ

We are just young boys and should play with those of equal strength. The wrestling match must go on properly so that irreligion does not taint the respectable members of the audience.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

We are not very strong (*bālāḥ*). The plural is used rather than the dual to indicate as a general example that they are in their group, among many other boys or indicate them as a group of cowherd boys. We should play with boys who are not greater or lesser in strength. It is my desire to do this as play. Another meaning is "O fools! We will play with our cowherd friends, not with you, who are less in strength." *Gopaiḥ samāna-guṇa-śīla-vayo-vilāsa-veśaiś ca murchita-kala-svana-venu-vīṇaiḥ*: the cowherds had similar qualities, character, age, play, dress, as well as similar music coming from their flutes and *vīṇas.* (*Krama-dīpikā*) It has already been said that the wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a thunderbolt. But we will engage in this fight at your insistence. It is not our fault if you die because of touching my limbs which are like thunderbolts. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

ahaṁ bālo mahān andhro vapuṣā parvatopamaḥ
yuddhaṁ mama sahānena rocate bāhuśālinā
yuddha-vyatikramaḥ kaścin na bhaviṣyati mat-kṛtaḥ
na hy ahaṁ bāhu-yodhānāṁ dūṣayiṣyāmi yan matam
yo 'yaṁ karīṣa-dharmaś ca toya-dharmaś ca raṅgajaḥ
kaṣāyasya ca saṁsargaḥ samayo hy eṣa kalpitaḥ
saṁyamaḥ sthiratā śauryaṁ vyāyāmaḥ satkriyā balam
reṅge ca niyatā siddhir etad yuddha-vidām matam

yad ayaṁ bāhu-yuddhaṁ vai savairaṁ kartum udyataḥ
atra vai nigrahaḥ kāryas toṣayiṣyāmy ahaṁ jagat
karūṣeṣu prasūto 'yaṁ cāṇūro nāma nāmataḥ
bāhuyodhī sarīreṇa karmabhiś cānucintyatām
etena bahavo mallā nipātānantaraṁ hatāḥ
raṅga-pratāpa-kāmena malla-mārgaś ca dūṣitaḥ
śāstra-siddhis tu yodhānāṁ saṁgrāme śastra-yodhinām
raṅga-siddhis tu mallānāṁ pratimalla-nighāta-jā
raṇe vijayamānasya kīrtir bhavati śāśvatī
hatasyāpi raṇe sastrair nāka-pṛṣṭhaṁ vidhīyate
raṇe hy ubhayataḥ siddhir hatasyāpi ghnato 'pi vā
sā hi prāṇāntikā yātrā mahadbhiḥ sādhu pūjitā
ayaṁ tu mārgo balataḥ kriyātaś ca viniḥsṛtaḥ
mṛtasya raṅge kaḥ svargo jayato vā kuto ratiḥ
ye tu kecit sva-doṣeṇa rājñaḥ paṇḍita-māninaḥ
pratāpārthe hatā mallā malla-hantur vadho hi saḥ

I am a child, and Cāṇūra from Andhra is like a mountain. I would like to fight with him, since he has strong arms. I will not break the rules of fighting and will not spoil the beliefs of the wrestlers. They have rubbed cow dung, water, *sindhūra* and cosmetics on their bodies. Sense control, steadiness, courage, bodily movements, actions prescribed by scriptures on fighting, and strength are causes of success according to experts at combat. Since this person is eager to engage in wrestling with the opponent, I will punish him and satisfy the world. Cāṇūra, a descendent of Vaivasvata Manu's son, should be considered a wrestler by his body and actions. He has killed many wrestlers after throwing them on the ground. With a desire for violence in the arena, he has spoiled the art of wrestling. The victory with weapons is done on the battlefield by wielders of weapons. The victory in the arena of wrestlers is caused by striking the opponent. He who is victorious on the battlefield has everlasting fame. He who dies by weapons on the battlefield attains Svarga. The person killed on the battlefield and the killer as well attain perfection. Those who die on the battlefield are worshipped extensively by the great. But in wrestling, fame is attained by strength and skill. One does not attain Svarga by dying in the wrestling arena. Some wrestlers may be killed by another wrestler in order

to glorify a king who thinks he is learned. The killer of those wrestlers should be killed.

Text 43.39

cāṇūra uvāca
na bālo na kiśoras tvaṁ balaś ca balināṁ varaḥ
līlayebho hato yena sahasra-dvipa-sattva-bhṛt

Cāṇūra said: You aren't really a child or even a young man, and neither is Balarāma, the strongest of the strong. After all, you casually killed an elephant who had the strength of a thousand other elephants.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You are not a youth and Balarāma is not weak, having little strength similar to a child. Rather he is the best among the strong since he killed an elephant casually. Since he saw Balarāma carrying the tusk of the elephant on his shoulder he thought that Balarāma had killed it.

Text 43.40

tasmād bhavadbhyāṁ balibhir yoddhavyaṁ nānayo 'tra vai
mayi vikrama vārṣṇeya balena saha muṣṭikaḥ

Therefore you two should fight powerful wrestlers. There's certainly nothing unfair about that. You, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, can show your prowess against me, and Balarāma can fight with Muṣṭika.

COMMENTARY: You should fight with many strong wrestlers. The plural is used because all wrestlers were eager to fight, one after the other. Fighting them one at a time is not against the rules. Show your prowess to me. You will not be able to bear my strength. I should not show prowess. You should do so. O person who has appeared in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty (*vārṣṇeya*)! You should show your valor. This is for inciting Kṛṣṇa to fight. Or you should have strength since you have appeared in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty as the son of the king's sister. Or do not worry about your safety. He does not mention the relationship directly out of great pride. Or he feared infamy among the people by thinking of causing harm to a relative.

Chapter Forty-four
The Killing of Kaṃsa

Text 44.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ carcita-saṅkalpo bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ
āsasādātha caṇūraṁ muṣṭikaṁ rohiṇī-sutaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, Kṛṣṇa made up his mind to accept the challenge. He confronted Cāṇūra, and Balarāma confronted Muṣṭika.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though Kṛṣṇa was endowed with unlimited power as Bhagavān, and thus could kill the wrestlers merely by his will, he confronted Cāṇūra in order to have some fun at wrestling. Though he could kill him immediately, he did so after playing at wrestling for a long time, as in the killing of the Madhu demon. *Lokavat tu līlā-kaivalyam*: the Lord is absorbed in his pastimes, as in ordinary life. (*Vedānta-sutra* 2.1.33) After that, Balarāma approached Muṣṭika.

Text 44.2

hastābhyāṁ hastayor baddhvā padbhyām eva ca pādayoḥ
vicakarṣatur anyonyaṁ prasahya vijigīṣayā

Seizing each other's hands and locking legs with each other, the opponents struggled powerfully, eager for victory.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Four verses (2-5) describe how they played. The word *ca* indicates that they locked other limbs as well. The word *eva* should be supplied after *hastābhyām* as well. If there is inequality in confronting the opponent, the sporting aspect of wrestling will dwindle. This applies to later verses also. Both sides desired to win. Since Kṛṣṇa was acting like an ordinary wrestler

he also desired victory, though he is the Lord whose victory is always guaranteed.

Text 44.3

aratnī dve aratnibhyāṁ jānubhyāṁ caiva jānunī
śiraḥ śīrṣṇorasoras tāv anyonyam abhijaghnatuḥ

They each struck fists against fists, knees against knees, head against head and chest against chest.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Each fist of one wrestler struck the fist of his opponent. This description refers to Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra *(tau).* They struck each other with their elbows (*aratnī*). Śrīdhara Svāmī defines *aratni* as the measurement from the middle of the arm to the fist, excluding the little finger. This however cannot be used in fighting. Though this can also refer to using that bodily part for fighting, it is not possible to use this part of the arm for striking the opponent because the little finger is extended. Nor is such a technique well known in wrestling. Thus *aratni* refers to the fist, which is one of the limbs used in the measurement. Later his limbs including the *aratni* will be mentioned in the commentary. Or *aratni* means the elbow according to *Viśva-prakāśa* and *Dvirūpa-kośa.*

Text 44.4

paribhrāmaṇa-vikṣepa-pariramboughāvapātanaiḥ
utsarpaṇāpasarpaṇaiś cānyonyaṁ pratyarundhatām

Each fighter contended with his opponent by dragging him about, shoving and crushing him, throwing him down and approaching from the front and back.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Utsarpaṇāpasarpaṇaiḥ means "by approaching from the front and back." The aorist tense is used in the verb *pratyarundhatām.* The addition of the letter *n* (in *pratyarundhatām*) is poetic license. Each tried to stop the other.

Text 44.5

utthāpanair unnayanaiś cālanaiḥ sthāpanair api
parasparaṁ jigīṣantāv apacakratur ātmanaḥ

Forcefully lifting and carrying each other, pushing each other away and holding each other down, the fighters hurt even their own bodies in their great eagerness for victory.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was not actually injured but acted in this way in response to Cāṇūra's injuries. Or Śukadeva describes it in this way because of lamentation in *prema*. Or it only refers to Cāṇūra being injured in fighting with Kṛṣṇa.

Text 44.6

tad balābalavad yuddhaṁ sametāḥ sarva-yoṣitaḥ
ūcuḥ parasparaṁ rājan sānukampā varūthaśaḥ

My dear King, all the women present, gathering in groups, feeling compassion, said that the match was an unfair fight between the strong and the weak.

COMMENTARY: The words "having seen this" should be added. Or as residents of Mathurā they speak this way about him without knowing about him. They were full of affection by their nature and spoke without examining the issues closely (*sānukampā*). Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit. You as a king understand this. They were in groups. Out of *prema*, they were all in agreement and their words were attractive.

Text 44.7

mahān ayaṁ batādharma eṣāṁ rāja-sabhā-sadām
ye balābalavad yuddhaṁ rājño 'nvicchanti paśyataḥ

[The women said:] Alas, what a greatly irreligious act the members of this royal assembly are committing! As the king watches this fight between the strong and the weak, they also want to see it.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ten verses (7-16) describe what they said. Since it was the king's assembly, it should have been able to discern dharma. The others desire to see this, since the king watches. *Bata* indicates lamentation.

Text 44.8

kva vajra-sāra-sarvāṅgau mallau śailendra-sannibhau
kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau

What comparison can there be between these two professional wrestlers, with limbs as strong as lightning bolts and bodies resembling mighty mountains, and these two young, immature boys with exceedingly tender limbs?

COMMENTARY: The wrestlers were like Meru, Himalayas or Vindhya mountains in shape and rough qualities. The repetition of the word *kva* indicates contrast. Being like great mountains was opposite of the boys of *kaiśora* age. "But one only reaches *kaiśora* period at fifteen years." They were called *kaiśora* because they had not attained *yauvana*. The word *śrī* indicates they were not too big and were very beautiful.

kva yauvanonmukhībhūta-sukmāra-tanur hariḥ
kva vajra-kaṭhinābhogī śarīro 'yaṁ mahāsuraḥ

Kṛṣṇa has a tender body, and is approaching *yauvana* period. This big demon is hard as a thunderbolt and well nourished. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Text 44.9

dharma-vyatikramo hy asya samājasya dhruvaṁ bhavet
yatrādharmaḥ samuttiṣṭhen na stheyaṁ tatra karhicit

Dharma has certainly been violated in this assembly. One should not remain for even a moment in a place where adharma is flourishing.

COMMENTARY: This is certainly (*hi*) a violation of dharma in this assembly of Kaṁsa (*asya*), if one remains present. No one should remain here. And intelligent persons should not remain here from the beginning. And no one should enter this assembly. Another group spoke in this way according to Śrīdhara Svāmī. However, since they all agreed, one can say they all said this. What can be said? One should not stay here.

Text 44.10

na sabhāṁ praviśet prājñaḥ sabhya-doṣān anusmaran
abruvan vibruvann ajño naraḥ kilbiṣam aśnute

A wise person should not enter an assembly if he knows the participants there are committing acts of impropriety. It is a sin if, recognizing the faults in an assembly, he remains silent, or even in ignorance speaks falsely.

COMMENTARY: The wise person should not enter where such acts have previously been committed. If he continually thinks of the fault but does not speak, he becomes sinful. A person may be qualified to supervise dharma. If he says nothing, he is not qualified. The fault applies to all present in the assembly. Qualified persons should not remain in such assemblies. It is a fault.

Text 44.11

valgataḥ śatrum abhitaḥ kṛṣṇasya vadanāmbujam
vīkṣyatāṁ śrama-vāry-uptaṁ padma-kośam ivāmbubhiḥ

Just see the lotus face of Kṛṣṇa as he darts around his foe! That face, covered with drops of perspiration brought on by the strenuous fight, resembles a lotus covered with dew.

COMMENTARY: "Seeing they are both strong since both are not tired, there is no fault if they fight." This is not true. Kṛṣṇa is tired. He appeared to be tired for those who had affection for him, and not for all people there, just as Kṛṣṇa appeared like a thunderbolt for the wrestlers. His face is compared to a lotus (*vadanāmbujam*) and this is then repeated with the phrase *padma-kośam*. His face is compared to a lotus because it possesses the beauty taken from a host of lotuses. Another comparison is then made, on realizing that his perspiration is like water drops on the lotus petal. For meter, the comparison is contracted from *śrama-vāribhiḥ uptam*, which matches the phrase *padma-kośam ivāmbubhiḥ*, to *śrama-vāryuptam*. The word *kośam* (bud) suggests a slight smile on Kṛṣṇa's face. Please see this attentively (*vīkṣyatām*).

Text 44.12

kiṁ na paśyata rāmasya mukham ātāmra-locanam
muṣṭikaṁ prati sāmarṣaṁ hāsa-saṁrambha-śobhitam

Don't you see the face of Balarāma, with its eyes copper-red from his anger toward Muṣṭika and its beauty enhanced by his absorption in laughter?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though Balarāma also has a tender body, seeing the fatigue of Kṛṣṇa he has become intensely angry. Look at that! Who does not see that? He laughs, out of disrespect for the wicked wrestler. His face is beautiful with his absorption in continuous laughter. Or he is beautiful with anger which gives rise to his laughter.

Text 44.13

puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayaṁ nṛ-liṅga
gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyaḥ
gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayaṁś ca veṇuṁ
vikrīdayāñcati giritra-ramārcitāṅghriḥ

How pious are the tracts of land in Vraja, for there the oldest person, disguising himself with human traits, wanders about, enacting his many pastimes! Adorned with wonderfully variegated forest garlands, he whose feet are worshiped by Śiva and Lakṣmī vibrates his flute as he tends the cows in the company of Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Others speak. Or, other affectionate women like the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*, endowed with the highest *prema* mixed with knowledge of his powers, in four verses (13-16) praise the land of Vraja because of its good qualities, while disrespecting Mathurā on seeing the inequality in the assembly. *Bata* indicates astonishment. The lands related to Vraja are most fortunate. But this is not at all surprising. The plural is used (*bhuvaḥ*) to indicate that all the lands of Vraja are fortunate, whereas not even one piece of other places is fortunate. In those lands (*yat*) Kṛṣṇa (*ayam*), though the oldest person (*purāṇa*), ever young, and the main person

(*puruṣaḥ*), wanders about. They speak in the present tense since very recently he wandered there and intended to return there. Actually, however the present tense establishes that wandering there is his eternal pastime. Outside of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa is rarely attained: his feet are worshipped according to the rules of *arcana* by Śiva and Lakṣmī in their minds. But they cannot serve him directly like the people of Vraja. "But now he is wandering in Mathurā also." He plays in a special manner there (*vi-krīḍayā*). In Vraja he plays, whereas he has been sent to Mathurā to fight with the enemies and is surrounded by indifferent people. Here in Mathurā he does not really play since here his actions do not arise from his spontaneous desire to play. There he plays in a remarkable way because of his desire for his most cherished pastimes, since that place has favourability and dearness to him. The play in the two places cannot be compared.

The favourable aspects and excellence of Vraja are then described. He has various remarkable garlands of flowers of most dear Vṛndāvana made by friends endowed with zeal for special fun. The special garlands also represent his clothing and ornaments. Herding the cows, objects of the greatest affection, assists his various other pastimes and bewilders the universe when he calls out sweetly to the cows. He is assisted by Balarāma in herding the cows. His cherished pastimes are nourished by the pastimes of Balarāma. What else can be said? He constantly produces sweetness with his flute which bewilders Indra, Śiva and Brahmā, and makes the trees develop goose bumps.

Text 44.14

gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran yad amuṣya rūpaṁ
lāvaṇya-sāram asamordhvam ananya-siddham
dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam
ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śrīya aiśvarasya

What worship must the *gopīs* have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equalled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh and extremely rare.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

How unfortunate we must be, since we have not seen him (as described in the previous verse.) The following verse also refers to the *gopīs*. There is no *avatāra* equal to him, what to speak of being superior to him. The *gopīs* drink that form out of thirst as if it were nectar. That form is constantly fresh (*anusavābhinavam*). The form constantly increases in novelty with the appearance of *prema* arising from the manifestation of the increasingly beautiful form. That form, the supreme *ālambana,* belonging to the Lord (*īśvarasya* is sometimes seen instead of *amuṣya*) endowed with all wealth, fame and beauty, is extremely rare for Lakṣmī and others. His beauty cannot even be described since when the writer begins to write, he becomes bewildered.

The previous verse could also indicate the good fortune of all the inhabitants of Vraja whereas this verse indicates the good fortune of the *gopīs*. Some women with the highest skills speak this pleasing statement in words, pleasing even to Śukadeva. What worship of the Lord (*tapaḥ*) did the *gopīs* perform to get this result which is beyond words and minds? If you know, then we are also eager to perform that worship. What austerity did they perform? They did not perform austerity, since austerity alone cannot yield such results. He can appear in this way only for his eternal consorts. That is because this is the supreme form. They could have done austerities because with their eyes they drink the form of he who cannot be described even when one is present before him (*amuṣya*). That form has the highest beauty in each limb. Though they drink continually, the sweetness does not diminish. By hinting at their thirst, Śukadeva compares that form to an ocean of nectar. If seeing him gives such an experience, what will embracing him do? What is the beauty of that form? It is the best part of all shining beauty (*lāvaṇya-sāram*), or that form is most intense with beauty. "The Lord has unlimited appearances in this world. They are also like this." This form is unequalled. "If this form does not exist elsewhere, how did he attain it?" He has this form by his nature, eternally (*ananya-siddham*). Fame, beauty and power indicate all six of his qualities as Bhagavān. He is the eternal shelter (*ekānta-dhāma*). "If the *gopīs* see this one form at all times, they will not feel astonishment at all times." That

form is increasingly fresh. “If that form is in Vraja, others can also see it.” It is rarely seen, since others do not have such *prema.* That form appears to the *gopīs* because of their fixed absorption. It will not manifest in any other condition.

Text 44.15

yā dohane ’vahanane mathanopalepa
preṅkheṅkhanārbha-ruditokṣaṇa-mārjanādau
gāyanti cainam anurakta-dhiyo ’śru-kaṇṭhyo
dhanyā vraja-striya urukrama-citta-yānāḥ

The ladies of Vraja are the most fortunate of women because, with their minds fully attached to Kṛṣṇa and their throats always choked up with tears, they constantly sing about him while milking the cows, winnowing grain, churning butter, gathering cow dung for fuel, riding on swings, taking care of their crying babies, sprinkling the ground with water, and cleaning their houses. He was always in their hearts.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Even when the *gopīs* could not directly see Kṛṣṇa, he manifested himself to them as if he was present. While milking cows or threshing grains, they sometimes saw him (*ca*) and sometimes sang about him. When they did not see that form, that form (*enam*) appeared before them as a *sphūrti.* Because we do not sing like that, we are most unfortunate. Out of great attraction, their throats became filled with tears. Or, because they were attached to him, they became overcome with crying (*aśru-kaṇṭyaḥ*). He made his appearance in their hearts, wherever they went (*urukrama-citta-yānāḥ*). Another version has *cintayānāḥ* (their thoughts went to him).

Text 44.16

prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyaṁ
gobhiḥ samaṁ kvaṇayato ’sya niśamya veṇum
nirgamya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ
paśyanti sa-smita-mukhaṁ sa-dayāvalokam

When the *gopīs* hear Kṛṣṇa playing his flute as he leaves Vraja in the morning with his cows or returns with them at sunset, the young girls quickly come out of their houses to see him. They must have performed many pious activities to be able to see him as he walks on the road, his smiling face mercifully glancing upon them.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse describes how they drink his beauty with their eyes. In the morning he goes with the cows and the cowherd boys while playing his flute. Understanding his presence by hearing the flute (*niśamya*), they quickly come out of their houses. Mention of the flute also suggests the beauty of his face.

tat tvan-mukhaṁ katham ivāmbuja-tulya-kakṣaṁ
vācām avāci nanu parvaṇi parvaṇīndoḥ
tat kiṁ bruve kim aparaṁ bhuvanaika-kānta-
veṇu tvad-ānanam anena samaṁ nu yat syāt

In describing your face, how can it be compared to a lotus? Since the moon withers with each phase, words of comparison with your face also wither. Do you speak of comparing your face to another face? How can I say that your face is equal to another face? *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* 97

The gopīs become so weak (*abalāḥ)* that they are unable to milk the cows because of hearing the flute and their continuously intense *prema*. Thus they stumble and fall here and there. Or they are so weak that they cannot go to meet him, and thus they simply look at him on the road. He becomes even more beautiful with his smile and his merciful glance. He thus enters Vraja in the most remarkable way (*ā-viśataḥ*), revealing his excellent forest dress, accompanied by the cows and cowherd boys.

Text 44.17

evaṁ prabhāṣamāṇāsu strīṣu yogeśvaro hariḥ
śatruṁ hantuṁ manaś cakre bhagavān bharatarṣabha

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As the women spoke thus, O hero of the Bhāratas, Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystic power, made up his mind to kill his opponent.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Even though they could see him at other times, the *gopīs* were able to do this without restriction in front of others on the pretext of his leaving and entering Vraja (along with all others). The women of Mathurā speak like this since it is very possible that Kṛṣṇa will return there to remove their feelings of separation. We are most unfortunate since we cannot see him as described. The women spoke in this manner with fear, out of pain caused by *prema* (*pra-bhāṣamāṇāṣu*), and could not stop speaking in this manner. The locative case indicates that this speech was befitting.

Kṛṣṇa was able to reveal or hide his powers at will (*yogeśvaraḥ*). He also wanted to remove the burden of the earth (*hariḥ*). Thus it was natural that he desired to kill his opponent—an enemy with actual animosity (*śatrum*). And he was Bhagavān. This was his ultimate identity, and the final cause of his desire to kill the enemy. O best of the Bhāratas! Addressing Parīkṣit, Śukadeva gives him joy since he was discontent at the delay in killing Cāṇūra in the wrestling match. Since you come in the dynasty of Bharata, you know such pastimes from the battle of Kurukṣetra.

Text 44.18

sa-bhayāḥ strī-giraḥ śrutvā putra-sneha-śucāturau
pitarāv anvatapyetāṁ putrayor abudhau balam

Out of affection for the two Lords, their parents became overwhelmed with sorrow when they heard the women's fearful statements. They grieved, not knowing their sons' strength.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Another version has *upaśrutvā*. Hearing the words of the women, because they were close (*upa*) or hearing the words attentively, Vasudeva and Devakī identified themselves as their parents because of parental affection. Because of this, they saw them as their sons. Because of great sorrow, they could not understand that their sons had great strength. They were not able to discern their power. They grieved. "Why was Akrūra not instructed from the beginning, when he was about to go to Vraja, so that this would

not happen?" They lamented in retrospect. *Abudhau* can take the genitive or the accusative (*balam*). It is said *kartṛ-karmaṇoḥ kṛti*: the possessive ending is used after a word to denote the agent and the object, when used with a *kṛt* affix. (*Pāṇini* 2.3.65) An example is found in *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya: dhāyair āmodam uttamam* (possessing the highest pleasure). The accusative case is used instead of the possessive.

Text 44.19

tais tair niyuddha-vidhibhir vividhair acyutetarau
yuyudhāte yathānyonyaṁ tathaiva bala-muṣṭikau

Balarāma and Muṣṭika, expertly displaying numerous wrestling techniques, battled each other in the same way that Kṛṣṇa and his opponent did.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The fight is again described. They fought as explained previously. *Taiḥ* is repeated to show the astonishing nature of the fight. They fought similar to Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra. Thus Cāṇūra's skill is indicated. There would be no thrill in the pastime if he were unqualified. The necessary actions were arranged by the *līlā-śakti.* Instead *of ubhau cānura-keśavau* (both Cāṇūra and Keśava) sometimes *vividhair acyutetarau* is seen (as in this version).

Text 44.20

bhagavad-gātra-niṣpātair vajra-nīṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuraiḥ
cāṇūro bhajyamānāṅgo muhur glānim avāpa ha

The harsh blows from the Supreme Lord's limbs fell like crushing thunder bolts upon Cāṇūra, breaking every part of his body and causing him more and more pain and fatigue.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa had inconceivable *śakti* (*bhagavān*). Because of this, Kṛṣṇa appeared as a thunderbolt among the wrestlers. Cāṇūra's limbs broke because of the cruel crush of thunderbolts.

Text 44.21

sa śyena-vega utpatya muṣṭī-kṛtya karāv ubhau
bhagavantaṁ vāsudevaṁ kruddho vakṣasy abādhata

Furious, Cāṇūra attacked Kṛṣṇa with the speed of a hawk and struck his chest with both fists.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After becoming tired, Cāṇūra moved away, but then attacked with the speed of a hawk. Using both fists at once to strike Kṛṣṇa, Cāṇūra showed his great strength and his skill in fighting. Since Kṛṣṇa was the Lord, full of all powers (*bhagavantam*), Cāṇūra was foolish to attack him. Cāṇūra showed his cruel nature in attacking Vasudeva's son (*vāsudevam*).

Texts 44.22–23

nācalat tat-prahāreṇa mālāhata iva dvipaḥ
bāhvor nigṛhya cāṇūraṁ bahuśo bhrāmayan hariḥ
bhū-pṛṣṭhe pothayām āsa tarasā kṣīṇa jīvitam
visrastākalpa-keśa-srag indra-dhvaja ivāpatat

No more shaken by the demon's mighty blows than an elephant struck with a flower garland, Kṛṣṇa grabbed Cāṇūra by his arms, swung him around many times and hurled him onto the ground with great force. His clothes, hair and garland scattered, the wrestler fell down dead, like a huge festival column collapsing.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though he was the Lord, he began performing actions in order to give joy to his devotees who were suffering. He did not imitate being disturbed at all for obtaining pleasure of his own. Kṛṣṇa remained joyful, undisturbed like an elephant hit by many garlands. Though an elephant may be hit by many garlands, nothing happens to the elephant. Though Kṛṣṇa was struck many times by Cāṇūra with great force, nothing happened to Kṛṣṇa. *Hari-vaṁśa* describes this:

yad ayaṁ bāhu-yuddhaṁ savairaṁ kartum udyataḥ
atra vai nigrahaḥ kāryas toṣayiṣyāmy ahaṁ jagat
karūṣeṣu prasūto ’yaṁ cāṇūro nāma nāmataḥ
bāhu-yodhī sarīreṇa karmabhiś cānucintyatām
etena bahavo mallā nipātāntaram hatāḥ
raṅga-pratāpa-kāmena malla-mārgaś ca dūṣitaḥ
ye tu kecit sva-doṣeṇa rājñaḥ paṇḍita-māninaḥ
pratāpārthe hatā mallā malla-hantur vadho hi saḥ

Since Cāṇūra is eager to wrestle with enmity, I must punish him. I will satisfy the world with this. This wrestler called Cāṇūra, born from the descendants of Karūṣa, is famous by his body and actions. It should be known that he has defeated and then killed many wrestlers and spoiled the sport of wrestling by his desire for fame in the arena. Some of the wrestlers have been killed in order to give glory to the foolish king because of his faulty behaviour. Killing the wrestlers was murder.

Kṛṣṇa whirled him around many times and in a variety of ways. By the force of throwing him on the ground Cāṇūra died. His life merged into the *ākāśa.*

bhrāmayitvā śata-guṇaṁ daitya-mallam amitrajit
bhūmāv āsphoṭayām āsa gagane gata-jīvitam

Whirling the demonic wrestler around a hundred times he splayed him out on the ground and made his life merge into the sky. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

He threw Cāṇūra on the ground, shaking him (*pothayām āsa*), as if giving him up, while saying “He is dead.” The word *sa apatat* (he fell) should be added to the comparison. He is compared to a flag staff falling because of his great size. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

dehena tasya mallasya cāṇurasya gatāyusaḥ
sanniruddho mahā-raṅgaḥ sa śaileneva lakṣyate

The large arena appeared to be obstructed by a mountain with the dead body of Cāṇūra.

Texts 44.24–25

tathaiva muṣṭikaḥ pūrvaṁ sva-muṣṭyābhihatena vai
balabhadreṇa balinā talenābhihato bhṛśam

pravepitaḥ sa rudhiram udvaman mukhato 'rditaḥ
vyasuḥ papātorvy-upasthe vātāhata ivāṅghripaḥ

Similarly, Muṣṭika struck Balabhadra with his fist and was slain. Receiving a violent blow from the mighty Lord's palm, the demon trembled all over in great pain, vomited blood and then fell lifeless onto the ground, like a tree blown down by the wind.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Muṣṭika struck Balarāma with his fist, but was then struck by Balarāma's strong palm. *Balabhadraṁ balocchrayāt*: he was called Balarāma because of his great power. (SB 10.2.13) He was strong by nature. He struck Muṣṭika with the palm of his hand, which displayed that power (*balinā*). Cāṇūra was compared to a flag staff falling since he fell from high up. Muṣṭika fell while standing on the earth, and is thus compared to a tree falling over in the wind.

Text 44.26

tataḥ kūṭam anuprāptaṁ rāmaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ
avadhīl līlayā rājan sāvajñaṁ vāma-muṣṭinā

Confronted next by the wrestler Kūṭa, Balarāma, the best of fighters, effortlessly and with paying attention killed him with his left fist, O King.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma killed Kūta, who approached him after Muṣṭika was killed (*anu*), or who approached him from behind out of fear. He is called Rāma because he gave pleasure to his friends. He did this without effort, using only his left fist, without much attention, since he was the best among fighters. O king! Śukadeva addressed Parīkṣit in joy, since the king was glowing with joy. Or *rājan* can mean "Balarāma shone because of the pastime."

Text 44.27

tarhy eva hi śalaḥ kṛṣṇa- prapadāhata-śīrṣakaḥ
dvidhā vidīrṇas tośalaka ubhāv api nipetatuḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa struck the wrestler Śala in the head with his toes and tore him in half. The Lord dealt with Tośala in the same way, and both

wrestlers fell down dead.

COMMENTARY: Then Śala and Toṣala approached Kṛṣṇa. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's great strength, the two did not want to approach Kṛṣṇa, but after Kūṭa approached Balarāma, out of fear of Kaṁsa they attacked Kṛṣṇa together. Or though they did not approach to fight like Kūṭa, they were killed since they were Kaṁsa's followers standing nearby, ready to fight. *Hi* means certainly. Kṛṣṇa's left foot hit his head, which fell off. Or the head shone (*kaḥ)* with crown and other ornaments. According to *Viśva*, *kaḥ* can mean Brahmā, *ātmā*, fire or the sun. Kṛṣṇa was able to knock his head off with his foot from far away, attracting his head with his foot (*kṛṣṇa*). They fell down completely, without life (*nipetatuḥ*).

Text 44.28

cāṇūre muṣṭike kūṭe śale tośalake hate
śeṣāḥ pradudruvur mallāḥ sarve prāṇa-parīpsavaḥ

Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala and Tośala having been killed, the remaining wrestlers all fled for their lives.

COMMENTARY: The remaining wrestlers fled quickly. Why did they give up fame and their fear of Kaṁsa? They desired to save their lives. They wanted to avoid death. They ignored everything else.

Text 44.29

gopān vayasyān ākṛṣya taiḥ saṁsṛjya vijahratuḥ
vādyamāneṣu tūryeṣu valgantau ruta-nūpurau

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then called their young cowherd boyfriends to join them, and in their company the Lords jumped about and sported, their ankle bells resounding as musical instruments played.

COMMENTARY: Out of fear of Kaṁsa or because of shyness, the boys did not come, but he forcibly pulled them there and met them because they were friends. They played at fighting. The two boys moved here and there (*valgantau*) while their ankle bells sounded. They played in the huge arena to show the beauty of their play wrestling and to show the superiority of the cowherds over Cāṇūra and others and make Kaṁsa angry in order to

kill him. This would also counteract later suffering of himself and the boys (on separation).

bala-kṣayaṁ vivṛddhiṁ ca dṛṣṭvā cāṇūra-kṛṣṇayoḥ
vārayāmāsa tūryāṇi kaṁsaḥ kopa-parāyaṇaḥ
mṛdaṅgādiṣu tūryeṣu pratiṣiddheṣu tat-kṣaṇāt
khe saṁgatāny avādyanta deva-tūryāṇy anekaśaḥ
jaya govinda cāṇūraṁ jahi keśava dānavam
antardhānagatā devās tam ūcur atiharṣitāḥ

Seeing the destruction of Cāṇūra' strength and the increase of Kṛṣṇa's strength, Kaṁsa, full of anger, stopped the music. When the *mṛdaṅgas* and other instruments stopped, at that moment, in the sky, the *devatās'* many instruments began to sound together. The *devatās* spoke in joy in the sky "Victory to Govinda! Keśava! Kill the demon Cāṇūra." *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Hari-vaṁśa says:

tataḥ prasvinna-vadanaḥ kṛṣṇa-praṇihitekṣaṇaḥ
nyavārayata tūryāṇi kaṁsaḥ savyena pāṇinā

With sweating face, Kaṁsa glared at Kṛṣṇa and stopped the music with his left hand.

svayam eva pravādyanta tūryaghoṣāś ca sarvaśaḥ

All the instruments began playing on their own. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Text 44.30

janāḥ prajahṛṣuḥ sarve karmaṇā rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ
ṛte kaṁsaṁ vipra-mukhyāḥ sādhavaḥ sādhu sādhv iti

Everyone except Kaṁsa rejoiced at the wonderful feat Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed. The exalted *brāhmaṇas* and great saints exclaimed, "Excellent! Excellent!"

COMMENTARY: Everyone was filled with intense joy. Balarāma gave pleasure to the people (*rāma*). Kṛṣṇa attracted everyone's hearts or gave everyone the highest bliss. They were blissful because of their activities of killing the demons. Balarāma is mentioned first because he was elder. The *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, etc., among whom there were the chief *brāhmaṇas*, all being devotees (*sādhavaḥ*), sang. Or the best of the *brāhmaṇas* and the other

devotees praised them since other *brāhmaṇas* were afraid of Kaṁsa and thus were not so bold.

Text 44.31

hateṣu malla-varyeṣu vidruteṣu ca bhoja-rāṭ
nyavārayat sva-tūryāṇi vākyaṁ cedam uvāca ha

The Bhoja king, seeing that his best wrestlers had all been killed or had fled, stopped the musical performance originally meant for his pleasure and spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY: His best wrestlers had been killed. Others in fear had quickly fled far away. He stopped his instruments but could not stop the heavenly instruments, according to *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Or according to Śukadeva, the *devatās* out of fear of Kaṁsa did not have instruments. Kaṁsa alone had instruments to inspire his wrestlers with a desire for victory. Because his desire was thwarted, he stopped the music. He revealed his wicked nature through his words. He spoke clearly (*ha*) so that everyone could hear his instructions. Actually, he spoke with internal suffering. He informed the Bhojas who were his followers. He ruled because he controlled some portion of the Yadus called Bhojas (*bhoja-rāṭ*).

Text 44.32

niḥsārayata durvṛttau vasudevātmajau purāt
dhanaṁ harata gopānāṁ nandaṁ badhnīta durmatim

[Kaṁsa said:] Drive the two wicked sons of Vasudeva out of the city! Confiscate the cowherds' property and arrest that fool Nanda!

COMMENTARY: Drive the boys from our city since they are evil, having killed the wrestlers while playing.

This is reasonable since they are sons of Vasudeva. They are similar to their father. The real meaning however is "They have proper behaviour, being merciful even to the wicked (*durvṛttau*) since they are Vasudeva's sons." Forcibly seize the dairy products brought by the cowherds. Accepting many offerings at once can bring us great steadiness. Bind Nanda with chains because he is wicked. Secretly he protected my enemy. The real meaning is: "He is merciful even to the wicked."

nanda-gopaś ca durmedhā pāpeṣv abhirato mama
āyaṣair nigaḍākārair loha-pāśāir nigṛhyatām

Crafty Nanda is absorbed in sins. He should be bound with iron chains. *Hari-vaṁśa*

nando ’pi gṛyatāṁ pāpo nigaḍair āyaṣair iha

Sinful Nanda should be bound with iron chains. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

He gave this instruction because he was afraid of the cowherds. Or naturally foul words came from his mouth in order to cause danger to best of the devotees.

Text 44.33

vasudevas sudurmedhā hanyatām āśv asattamaḥ
ugrasenaḥ pitā cāpi sānugaḥ para-pakṣa-gaḥ

Kill that most evil fool Vasudeva! And also kill my father, Ugrasena, along with his followers, who have all sided with our enemies!

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva is wicked (*sudurmedhā*) because he switched his son for Nanda’s child. He is most untruthful (*asattamaḥ*), since he broke his promise to deliver all his sons to me. The real meaning of s*udurmedhā* is “His mind is glorious, showing affection even to the wicked.” There is no purer person than him (*asattama*ḥ). The word *ca* indicates all those mentioned.

Though Ugrasena is my father, he should still be killed, since he is partial to my enemies or follows Vasudeva. The followers of Vasudeva and Ugrasena should also be killed since they are loyal to them.

Pitā means he was born from Ugrasena. However, *Hari-vaṁśa* says that Kaṁsa’s real father was a Dānava named Drumila, who by trick seduced Ugrasena’s wife. But Kaṁsa did not know, and thus Śukadeva follows his ignorance in saying that Ugrasena was his father.

Text 44.34

evaṁ vikatthamāne vai kaṁse prakupito ’vyayaḥ
laghimnotpatya tarasā mañcam uttuṅgam āruhat

As Kaṁsa thus raved so audaciously, the infallible Kṛṣṇa, intensely angry, quickly and forcefully leaped onto the high royal dais.

COMMENTARY: *Vai* means certainly. Kṛṣṇa became very angry at the proud words of Kaṁsa which were more and more offensive. He quickly jumped on the platform, though it was high.

Text 44.35

tam āviśantam ālokya mṛtyum ātmana āsanāt
manasvī sahasotthāya jagṛhe so 'si-carmaṇī

Seeing Kṛṣṇa approaching like death personified, the quick-witted Kaṁsa instantly rose from his seat and took up his sword and shield.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing Kṛṣṇa quickly enter the royal pavilion, seeing him as his own death, out of great fear, fearful Kaṁsa (*manasvī* – having a bad mind) rose from his seat and, not having a weapon, grabbed his sword and shield.

bhūma-nindā-praśaṁsāsu nitya-yoge'tiśāyane
saṁsarge'sti vivakṣāyāṁ bhavanti matub-ādayaḥ

Words ending in *mat* or other suffixes express abundance, criticism, praise, constant connection, excess, or combination.

Thus *manasvī* can mean "having abundance" of mental anguish or fear.

Text 44.36

taṁ khaḍga-pāṇiṁ vicarantam āśu
śyenaṁ yathā dakṣiṇa-savyam ambare
samagrahīd durviṣahogra-tejā
yathoragaṁ tārkṣya-sutaḥ prasahya

Sword in hand, Kaṁsa moved quickly from side to side like a hawk in the sky. But Kṛṣṇa, whose fearsome strength is irresistible, powerfully seized the demon just as the son of Tārkṣya might capture a snake.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kaṁsa moved about quickly in various ways (*vi-carantam*), circling around, to the left and right with great skill, like a hawk in the sky. This indicates that he was hard to catch. But Kṛṣṇa seized him with great strength (*prasahya*) since he was endowed with great, intolerable ferocity (*durviṣahogra-tejā*), just as Garuḍa attacks intolerably ferocious snakes. The example shows that many intolerably ferocious snakes can be easily caught since their power is ordinary compared to Kṛṣṇa's.

Text 44.37

pragṛhya keśeṣu calat-kirītaṁ
nipātya raṅgopari tuṅga-mañcāt
tasyopariṣṭāt svayam abja-nābhaḥ
papāta viśvāśraya ātma-tantraḥ

Grabbing Kaṁsa by the hair and knocking off his crown, the lotus-naveled Lord threw him off the elevated dais onto the wrestling mat. Then the independent Lord, the support of the entire universe, threw himself upon the King.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse shows how he caught Kaṁsa. He held him firmly by his hair. "How could he suddenly catch him by the hair since his hair was bound by a crown?" His crown fell off when he moved his head violently, as Kṛṣṇa attempted to grab his head. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *keśeṣvākṛṣya vigalat kirīṭam*: when Kṛṣṇa grabbed Kaṁsa's hair, Kaṁsa's crown fell off. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

mukuṭaś cāpata tasya kāñcano vajra-bhūṣitaḥ
śirasas tasya kṛṣṇena parāmṛṣṭasya pāṇinā

When Kṛṣṇa grabbed him with his hand, the crown made of gold and ornamented with diamonds fell off his head.

Kṛṣṇa was independent because he was the shelter of the universe. The universe is within the lotus of the navel (*abja-nābhaḥ*) of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is but an expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 44.38

taṁ samparetaṁ vicakarṣa bhūmau
harir yathebhaṁ jagato vipaśyataḥ
hā heti śabdaḥ su-mahāṁs tadābhūd
udīritaḥ sarva-janair narendra

As a lion drags a dead elephant, the Lord then dragged Kaṁsa's dead body along the ground in full view of everyone present. O King, all the people in the arena tumultuously cried out, "Oh! Oh!"

COMMENTARY: Because Kṛṣṇa fell on top of him, he died (*samparetam*). To satisfy Vasudeva and others, he dragged him on the earth. This produced a huge trough.

gauraveṇāti-mahatā parikhā tena kṛṣyatā
kṛtā kaṁsasya dehena vegeneva mahāmbhasaḥ

He dug out a huge trough of water by pulling Kaṁsa's body quickly. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

This is known as Kaṁsa's canal or Kaṁsa's River. This is near Viśranti-tīrtha. This implies his body was huge and tough. 'Roaring like a lion' suggests that he pulled him easily, with anger. Everyone saw this directly. No one had been able to stop him though he was the wickedest person. Now everyone was happy. They exclaimed with disrespect for the death of a huge demon.

tato hāhā-kṛtaṁ sarvam āsīt tad-raṅga-maṇḍalam
avajñayā hataṁ dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇena mathureśvaram

Then the entire arena became filled with cries of astonishment as the people saw that the master of Mathurā had been contemptuously killed by Kṛṣṇa. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Śukadeva, full of joy, called out to Parīkṣit when he saw that he was also joyous. Or since you are king you can understand this nature in people.

Text 44.39

sa nityadodvigna-dhiyā tam īśvaraṁ
pibann adan vā vicaran svapan śvasan
dadarśa cakrāyudham agrato yatas
tad eva rūpaṁ duravāpam āpa

Kaṁsa had always been disturbed by the thought that the Supreme Lord was to kill him. Therefore when drinking, eating, moving about, sleeping or simply breathing, the King had always seen the Lord before him with cakra in his hand. Thus Kaṁsa achieved the rare boon of attaining a form like the Lord's.

COMMENTARY: In relation to this, Kaṁsa's liberation is described. Kaṁsa constantly (*nityadā*) saw Kṛṣṇa. Or he saw him in such a way to produce liberation (*nityadā*), with intelligence full of fear, thinking of him as an enemy (*udvigna-dhiyā*). Or he thought with the idea of destroying the Lord's eternal abode (*nityadā*). By taking the role of the Lord, he thought he could destroy his fear. The Lord manifested his upraised *cakra* for killing him. Because he saw the Lord in front of him, he attained a form given to demons, composed of Brahman, not a form as a personal associate, rare for *yogīs*.

Vā indicates everything. He thought of the Lord while walking (*vicaran*), breathing and all other activities not mentioned. It was previously mentioned that he thought of the Lord while walking and eating. How did he now attain liberation, though he was so sinful? It was by the power of the Lord. Or the Lord manifested his unlimited powers. Though as Kālanemi he was previously killed by Viṣṇu, he did not attain liberation at that time. Now he attained it, by thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 44.40

tasyānujā bhrātaro 'ṣṭau kaṅka-nyagrodhakādayaḥ
abhyadhāvann ati-kruddhā bhrātur nirveśa-kāriṇaḥ

Kaṁsa's eight younger brothers, led by Kaṅka and Nyagrodhaka, then attacked the Lords in a rage, seeking to avenge their brother's death.

COMMENTARY: Instead of *anujā* (younger brothers) sometimes *anugā* (followers) is seen. In any case their natures were similar to Kaṁsa's. They attacked Kṛṣṇa on all sides, or facing him. Or they attacked without fear (*abhi*), rushing quickly.

Text 44.41

tathāti-rabhasāṁs tāṁs tu saṁyattān rohiṇī-sutaḥ
ahan parigham udyamya paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ

As they ran swiftly toward the two Lords, ready to strike, the son of Rohiṇī slew them with his club just as a lion easily kills other animals.

COMMENTARY: They were as quick (*rabhasān*) as Kaṁsa, or showed similar anger (*tathā*). He raised his club, a weapon made of his *muṣala* (pestle) and killed them since he was the son of Rohiṇī, doing what was pleasing for Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Or he wanted to please Vasudeva and Devakī, his parents. The enemies were like animals and Balarāma was like a lion. They were insignificant. He could kill them easily.

Text 44.42

nedur dundubhayo vyomni brahmeśādyā vibhūtayaḥ
puṣpaiḥ kirantas taṁ prītāḥ śaśaṁsur nanṛtuḥ striyaḥ

Kettledrums resounded in the sky as Brahmā, Śiva and other *devatās,* the Lord's expansions, rained down flowers upon him with pleasure. They chanted his praises, and their wives danced.

COMMENTARY: All the *devatās* became pleased. Drums sounded on their own, since they were heavenly drums, or on the strength of the auspiciousness. Brahmā and Indra and others, who were his servants (*vibhūtayaḥ*), pleased, showered flowers and sang praises. (Very good! Very good!) The Apsarās danced.

Text 44.43

teṣāṁ striyo mahā-rāja suhṛn-maraṇa-duḥkhitāḥ
tatrābhīyur vinighnantyaḥ śīrṣāṇy aśru-vilocanāḥ

My dear King, the wives of Kaṁsa and his brothers, aggrieved by the death of their well-wishing husbands, came forward with tearful eyes, beating their heads.

COMMENTARY: The wives and other women related to Kaṁsa and his allies, grieving because of the death of their husbands, etc., approached those dead bodies in the arena (*abhīyuḥ*). Or they came without fear (*abhi*). They beat their heads constantly (*nignantyaḥ*), pulling out their hair (*vi*) while crying. O great king! Śukadeva cries out in joy or they were aggrieved by

the death of their friend, the great king Kaṁsa (*mahārāja*). Though they grieved for others, they did so especially for Kaṁsa who was the protector of all.

Text 44.44

śayānān vīra-śayāyāṁ patīn āliṅgya śocatīḥ
vilepuḥ su-svaraṁ nāryo visṛjantyo muhuḥ śucaḥ

Embracing their husbands, who lay dead on the battlefield, the sorrowful women loudly lamented while shedding constant tears.

COMMENTARY: *Vīra-śayāyām* means death on the battlefield. They were lying down as if sleeping (*śayānān*). They each embraced their husbands and lamented with loud, pitiful voices, while constantly releasing tears. *Muhuḥ* (constantly) can modify the other verbs as well.

Text 44.45

hā nātha priya dharma-jña karuṇānātha-vatsala
tvayā hatena nihatā vayaṁ te sa-gṛha-prajāḥ

[The women cried out:] Alas, O master, O dear one, O knower of dharma! O kind and compassionate protector of the shelterless! By your being slain we have also been slain, together with your household and offspring.

COMMENTARY: They each addressed their dead husband, among all of those who lamented. Or the chief wives, those of Kaṁsa lamented. *Hā* indicates great difficulty. O most compassionate (*karuṇā-natha*)! O affectionate one (*vatsala*)! Or O compassionate one (*karuṇa*)! O affectionate to persons without shelter (*anātha-vatsala*). The addresses are progressively more excellent. By your complete death (*āhate*), we die. Or even slightly wounded, we, along with our children, die completely (*nihatāḥ*). What to speak of your dying.

Text 44.46

tvayā virahitā patyā purīyaṁ puruṣarṣabha
na śobhate vayam iva nivṛttotsava-maṅgalā

O great hero among men, bereft of you, its master, this city has lost its beauty, just as we have, and all festivity and good fortune within it have come to an end.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The city is without festivals and auspicious singing and dancing since you have been separated from us permanently (*vi-rahitā*). Your qualities are not present in anyone else (*puruṣarsabha*). The words also have a negative meaning. *anātha priya dharma-jña karuṇānātha-vatsala* may be taken as one word: O wretched, with no affection, no knowledge of dharma, no mercy and without compassion for the wretched. *Ṛṣabha* refers to a musical note, a medicinal herb, a bull and also means excellent according to *Viśva-prakāśa*. O devious man! Does not the city look wonderful without you?

Text 44.47

anāgasāṁ tvaṁ bhūtānāṁ kṛtavān droham ulbaṇam
tenemāṁ bho daśāṁ nīto bhūta-dhruk ko labheta śam

O dear one, you have been brought to this state because of the terrible violence you committed against innocent creatures. How can one who harms others attain happiness?

COMMENTARY: If he were an excellent person, how could he die so miserably? You committed excessive violence to sinless beings. O king of the demons! "But that is not a sin for demons like me dedicated to *jñāna*." There is no happiness or auspiciousness (*śam*) for the violent person.

Text 44.48

sarveṣām iha bhūtānām eṣa hi prabhavāpyayaḥ
goptā ca tad-avadhyāyī na kvacit sukham edhate

Kṛṣṇa causes the appearance and disappearance of all beings in this world, and he is their maintainer as well. One who disrespects him can never prosper happily.

COMMENTARY: "For a king it is necessary to commit violence against his enemies." *Hi* means he certainly or he alone. He is certainly or alone (*hi*),

the creator and destroyer as well as the maintainer (*goptā*). This means he is the Supreme Lord. Maintenance is mentioned last because at this time he has appeared in the world for protection. It is a great sin to commit violence to persons he protects, as he is the protector of the world. The person who disrespects him (*avadhyāyī*) or commits violence to him cannot attain happiness, even by offending only once, what to speak of offending him because of one's nature. *Avadhyāyī* indicates that the person has a character of disrespecting others. He does not prosper happily (*sukham edhate*). He continually dwindles, with suffering. With fear in life, one never attains happiness. In death, one also does not attain happiness (*kvacit*). Liberation is the only way to have an absence of suffering.

Text 44.49

śrī-śuka uvāca
rāja-yoṣita āśvāsya bhagavāl̐ loka-bhāvanaḥ
yām āhur laukikīṁ saṁsthāṁ hatānāṁ samakārayat

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After consoling the royal ladies, Kṛṣṇa, sustainer of all the worlds, arranged for the prescribed funeral rites to be performed.

COMMENTARY: He consoled the women since he was the maintainer of all people (*loka-bhāvanaḥ*), with natural compassion. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

bahu-prakāram asvasthaḥ paścāt tāpāturo hariḥ
tāḥ samāśvāsayām āsa svayam asrāvilekṣaṇaḥ

The Lord, experiencing great unhappiness and then afflicted with suffering, comforted the women personally with tears in his eyes.

Hari-vaṁśa says:

kaṁsa-nārī-pralapāṁś ca śrutvā sukaruṇān bahūn
garhamāṇas tathātmānaṁ tasmin yādava-saṁsadi
aho mayātibālyena nara-roṣānuvartinā
vaidhavyaṁ strī-sahasrāṇāṁ kaṁsasyāsya kṛte kṛtam

Hearing the excessive, miserable lamentation of Kaṁsa's wives, he criticized himself in the assembly of Yadus. "Oh! I have made widows of

Kaṁsa's thousand wives because of my foolishness, influenced by human anger."

Kṛṣṇa arranged for the funeral rites for the dead. *Sa nīto yamunā-tīram uttaram*: rites were performed on the north bank of the Yamunā. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) He made the arrangement in order to stop the lamentation of the women who would then not see the burning directly. These rites were only customary, since actually funeral rites are covered by attainment of the Supreme Lord.

Text 44.50

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ caiva mocayitvātha bandhanāt
kṛṣṇa-rāmau vavandāte śirasāspṛśya pādayoḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma released their mother and father from bondage and offered obeisances to them, touching their feet with their heads.

COMMENTARY: After that (*atha*), after making arrangements for Kaṁsa's body, because he could not tolerate others suffering, he freed first his mother out of extreme affection and to please Vasudeva, and then freed Vasudeva, his father, since he could not tolerate their bondage. The two boys touched their heads to their feet, showing great devotion to them. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first since he was filled with compassion and did this first. Balarāma followed his actions.

Text 44.51

devakī vasudevaś ca vijñāya jagad-īśvarau
kṛta-saṁvandanau putrau sasvajāte na śaṅkitau

Devakī and Vasudeva, knowing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to be the Lords of the universe, simply stood with joined palms. Being apprehensive, they did not embrace their sons.

COMMENTARY: They knew the boys were the Supreme Lords in a special way. Previously they saw Kṛṣṇa's remarkable form in the prison but now they had seen and heard about his astonishing actions and realized them as Lords of the universe. Or experiencing the boys with parental love in *prema* was superior to knowing them as Lords of the universe. In this way, the realization was "special (*vijñāyā*)." Or they knew them as the Lords

after Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had offered respects to their parents. They praised them (*kṛta-saṁvandanau*) and stood there. Or though they knew the two as the Supreme Lords, they were not worried but embraced them since they accepted them as their sons, and offered respects (*kṛta-saṁvandanau*). Devakī is mentioned first since she was the main person to embrace with affection. Later the parents placed the boys on their laps out of intense affection, after the Lord spread his *māyā* out of mercy, to cover their awareness of him as the Lord.

Chapter Forty-five
Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher's Son

Text 45.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
pitarāv upalabdhārthau viditvā puruṣottamaḥ
mā bhūd iti nijāṁ māyāṁ tatāna jana-mohinīm

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Understanding that his parents were becoming aware of his powers, the Supreme Lord thought that this should not be allowed to happen. Thus he expanded his Yogamāyā, which bewilders his devotees.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to the Lord's power to impel *jīvas* with force, which could send Nanda back to Vraja.

yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

Because I am superior to the conditioned and liberated *jīvas*, I am celebrated in the *Vedas* and the *smṛtis* as the Supreme Person. BG 15.18

As the supreme Lord (*puruṣottamaḥ*), he was omniscient and full of all qualities such as compassion. Knowing his parents' awareness of his powers, he spread his power of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*māyām*) or mercy, which bewilders his devotees, causing attachment to his lotus feet.

Text 45.2

uvāca pitarāv etya sāgrajaḥ sātvatarṣabhaḥ
praśrayāvanataḥ prīṇann amba tāteti sādaram

Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of the Sātvatas, approached his parents with his elder brother. Humbly bowing his head and gratifying them by respectfully addressing them as "My dear mother" and

"My dear father," Kṛṣṇa spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: His parents were standing at a distance out of devotion with the knowledge that he was the Lord. Thus he approached them (*etya*). Or he came forward and embraced them, since he was the protector of

devotes (*sātvatarṣabhaḥ*). Or he appeared as the best of the Yadus to manifest unlimited qualities such as affection for the devotees. By giving mercy to his parents, he gave mercy to all the Yadus. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says *mohāya yadu-cakrasya vitatāna sa vaiṣṇavīm:* he spread *yoga-māyā* for bewildering the Yadus. He went with Balarāma in order to instill greater faith in his parents. By calling to them, he pleased them, and becoming joyful himself, he spoke with respect.

Text 45.3

nāsmatto yuvayos tāta nityotkaṇṭhitayor api
bālya-paugaṇḍa-kaiśorāḥ putrābhyām abhavan kvacit

[Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear Father, because of us, your two sons, you and mother Devakī always remained in anxiety and could never enjoy our childhood, boyhood or youth.

COMMENTARY: He addresses his father first, since he is more prominent. He addresses him as a father to arouse within him paternal affection since Vasudeva did not have strong affection because he had knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as the Lord. In saying that they could not enjoy his *kaiśora* period, he means that they could not enjoy his full *kaiśora* period, but only the very end.

Text 45.4

na labdho daiva-hatayor vāso nau bhavad-antike
yāṁ bālāḥ pitṛ-geha-sthā vindante lālitā mudam

Deprived by fate, we could not live with you and enjoy the pampered happiness most children enjoy in their parents' home.

COMMENTARY: We should not have deprived you of happiness, but we were deprived of happiness. By ill fate, we could not live with you. He says this with great humility. However, his words can also mean "Not affected by fate (*adaiva-hatayoḥ*), we could not live with you." The Lord is not dependent on karma. Children, living in their parents' house, cared for by their parents (or even not cared for—*alalitā*), experience happiness.

Text 45.5

sarvārtha-sambhavo deho janitaḥ poṣito yataḥ
na tayor yāti nirveśaṁ pitror martyaḥ śatāyuṣā

With one's body one can acquire all goals of life, and it is one's parents who give the body birth and sustenance. Therefore no mortal man can repay his debt to his parents, even if he serves them for a full lifetime of a hundred years.

COMMENTARY: The body is usually nourished by the parents. However, Kṛṣṇa was nourished by Nanda and Yaśodā. The body is subject to death (*martyaḥ*) and lives only a hundred years.

Text 45.6

yas tayor ātmajaḥ kalpa ātmanā ca dhanena ca
vṛttiṁ na dadyāt taṁ pretya sva-māṁsaṁ khādayanti hi

A son who, though able to do so, fails to provide for his parents with his physical resources and wealth is forced after his death to eat his own flesh.

COMMENTARY: Physical resources and wealth should both be given (*ca*). He must eat his own (*svasya*) flesh. *Hi* means certainly. If one is ill, the rule does not apply. The servants of Yama make him eat his own flesh.

Text 45.7

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ vṛddhaṁ bhāryāṁ sādhvīṁ sutam śiśum
guruṁ vipraṁ prapannaṁ ca kalpo 'bibhrac chvasan-mṛtaḥ

A man who, though able to do so, fails to support his parents, elders of the family, chaste wife, young child or spiritual master, or who neglects a *brāhmaṇa* or anyone who comes to him for shelter, is considered dead, though breathing.

COMMENTARY: He should support elders, or an old father and a chaste wife. Gurus and *brāhmaṇas* should always be supported (even if not old). Wives, etc., are mentioned, though not related to the case at hand.

Those capable are at fault by not supporting them. If not capable, the fault does not apply. Thus Vasudeva and Devakī are not at fault, since they were incapable.

Text 45.8

tan nāv akalpayoḥ kaṁsān nityam udvigna-cetasoḥ
mogham ete vyatikrāntā divasā vām anarcatoḥ

Thus we have wasted all these days, unable as we were to properly honor you because our minds were always disturbed by fear of Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY: We could not honor you because of fear of Kaṁsa. Thus our *kaiśora* days have been spent uselessly.

Text 45.9

tat kṣantum arhathas tāta mātar nau para-tantrayoḥ
akurvator vāṁ śuśrūṣāṁ kliṣṭayor durhṛdā bhṛśam

Dear Father and Mother, please forgive us for not serving you. We are not independent and have been greatly frustrated by cruel Kaṁsa.

COMMENTARY: They call out to their parents to invoke their affection. Forgive us for not being able to serve you, since we were not independent. The parents should forgive the offense of the children out of affection. Moreover, we had to hide and were persecuted by Kaṁsa.

Text 45.10

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti māyā-manuṣyasya harer viśvātmano girā
mohitāv aṅkam āropya pariṣvajyāpatur mudam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus beguiled by the words of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul of the universe, who by his internal illusory potency appeared to be a human, his parents joyfully raised the two boys on their laps and embraced them.

COMMENTARY: The Lord was *antaryāmī* (*viśvātmānaḥ*), with human form by his mercy (*māyā-manuṣyasya*), attractive to the world (*hareḥ*). Or he had a human form, attractive to all the world, because he was the dearest (*viśvātmanaḥ*). By his words he attracted their hearts (*mohitau*). They placed Kṛṣṇa or both of them on their laps, with more affection for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 45.11

siñcantāv aśru-dhārābhiḥ sneha-pāśena cāvṛtau
na kiñcid ūcatū rājan bāṣpa-kaṇṭhau vimohitau

Pouring out a shower of tears upon the Lord, his parents, who were bound up by the rope of affection, could not speak. They were overwhelmed, O King, and their throats choked up with tears.

COMMENTARY: They could not speak at all (*ca*) because their throats were choked with tears. They were completely bewildered—they could not understand anything. They showered tears and soaked Kṛṣṇa, because they were covered with ropes of *prema* completely (*āvṛtau*), which were tight and long. O King! Being naturally affectionate, you can understand this.

Text 45.12

evam āśvāsya pitarau bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
mātāmahaṁ tūgrasenaṁ yadūnām akaron ṇṛpam

Thus having comforted his mother and father, the Lord, appearing as the son of Devakī, installed his maternal grandfather, Ugrasena, as King of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ugrasena was qualified to be the king of the Yadus because he should be respected, being a maternal grandfather, and because he should be respected for his relation with his parents. The word *tu* indicates his main aim in doing this: his desire to return to Gokula. In *Hari-vaṁśa* Kṛṣṇa speaks to Ugrasena:

ahaṁ sa eva go-madhye gopaiḥ saha vanecaraḥ
prītimān vicariṣyāmi kāmacārī yathā gajaḥ
etāvac chataśo 'py evaṁ satyena prabravīmi te
na me kāryaṁ nṛpatvena vijñāpyaṁ kriyatām idam
bhavān rajas tu me mānyo yadūnām agraṇīḥ prabhuḥ
vijayāyābhiṣicyasva svarājye rājasattama

With great affection I wander at will like an elephant, among the cows along with the cowherds in Vṛndāvana. I say to you a hundred times that,

in truth, I do not want to be the king. Announce this publicly. I consider that you, the best of the Yadus, should be the king and master. Best of kings! You should be consecrated in your kingdom.

Kṛṣṇa made Ugrasena the king, but not as he was before, since this was done by Bhagavān: he who can act or not act, or act otherwise. Because of the Lord's affection for his devotee, the curse of Yayāti—that Yadus should not be kings—was not considered relevant. Thus the previous kingship in the Yadu dynasty was actually imaginary. Ugrasena was made king after freeing him from prison. This was explained at the end of the first chapter. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

ugrasenaṁ tato bandhān mumoca madhusūdanaḥ
abhyasiṁcat tadaivainaṁ nija-rājye hatātmajam

Kṛṣṇa freed Ugrasena from his bondage and consecrated him in his kingdom now that his son was dead.

Hari-vaṁśa describes Ugrasena lamenting from Kaṁsa's death, but it should be understood that his lamentation was only customary. This is not even considered by Śukadeva. Other facts in *Hari-vamśa* such as Vasudeva not being imprisoned are narrations from different *kalpas.*

Text 45.13

āha cāsmān mahā-rāja prajāś cājñaptum arhasi
yayāti-śāpād yadubhir nāsitavyaṁ nṛpāsane

The Lord told him: O mighty King, we are your subjects, so please command us, even though, because of the curse of Yayāti, no Yadu may sit on the royal throne.

COMMENTARY: You should instruct all of us Yadus (*asmān*). "But they are all great persons. How can I order them?" We are your subjects, dependent on you (*prajāḥ*). O great King! Since you are the king of the Yadus, you control the country. Previously, you had the kingdom and now you can protect us particularly. You should take complete control now.

A kingdom was trifling for Kṛṣṇa and thus he did not want to rule, since he desired to return to Vraja. This is described in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

na hi rājyena me kāryaṁ nāpy ahaṁ rājya-lālasaḥ
na cāpi rājya-lobhena mayākāmso nipātitaḥ
kintu loka-hitārthāya kīrtyārthaṁ ca sutas tava
vyaṅga-bhūtaḥ kulasyāsya sānujo vinipātitaḥ
ahaṁ sa eva gomadhye gopaiḥ saha vanecaraḥ
prītimān vicariyṣāmi kāmacārī yathā gajaḥ

I have no use of a kingdom nor do I desire a kingdom. I did not kill Kaṁsa with a desire for a kingdom or for fame, but for benefiting the people. Your son, a deformed member of the family, was killed along with his younger brothers. With great affection I wander at will like an elephant, among the cows along with the cowherds in Vṛndāvana.

All the Yadus agreed with his skillful words. "Due to the curse of Yayāti, I can rule as previously, but not as the king." Though you cannot sit on the throne as a king, you can order us as the king by my great influence. Out of shyness however he does not say this directly.

Text 45.14

mayi bhṛtya upāsīne bhavato vibudhādayaḥ
baliṁ haranty avanatāḥ kim utānye narādhipāḥ

Since I am present in your entourage as your personal attendant, all the *devatās* and other exalted personalities will come with heads bowed to offer you tribute. What, then, to speak of others, the rulers of men?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He shows Ugrasena's power to command. At his command, the *devatās* offer tribute with heads bowed in devotion (*avanatāḥ*). *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

yayāti-śāpād vaṁśo 'yam arājyārhe 'pi sāṁpratam
mayi bhṛtye sthite devan ājñāpayatu kiṁ nṛpaiḥ

Though by Yayātī's curse the Yadus should not rule, while I remain as your servant, you may give orders to the *devatās,* what to speak of kings.

Another version has *hariṣyanti* (will offer) instead of *haranti*. *Anye* indicates other rulers, who are inferior, or others, even kings.

Texts 45.15–16

sarvān svān jñati-sambandhān digbhyaḥ kaṁsa-bhayākulān
yadu-vṛṣṇy-andhaka-madhu dāśārha-kukurādikān
sabhājitān samāśvāsya videśāvāsa-karśitān
nyavāsayat sva-geheṣu vittaiḥ santarpya viśva-kṛt

The Lord then brought all his close family members and other relatives back from the various places to which they had fled in fear of Kaṁsa. He received the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas, Madhus, Dāśārhas, Kukuras and other clans with due honor, and he also consoled them, for they were weary of living in foreign lands. Then Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the universe, resettled them in their homes and gratified them with valuable gifts.

COMMENTARY: Many had left Mathurā and had been living in Kuru-pāñcala and other places. *Ādikān* also indicates the Sātvatas. The Bhojas, along with Akrūra, generally followed Kaṁsa and lived in Mathurā. These eight were the chief groups of the Yādavas. They were welcomed, quickly coming and going. They were consoled because they suffered a long time in foreign lands (*karśitān*). Thus they were given abundant wealth and settled quickly with celebrations, by cleaning their houses and supplying cloth, ornaments, and furniture. How was it possible to make so many houses to be situated there? As the maker of the universe, he supplied all types of opulences not available to even Indra.

Texts 45.17–18

kṛṣṇa-saṅkarṣaṇa-bhujair guptā labdha-manorathāḥ
gṛheṣu remire siddhāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-gata-jvarāḥ
vīkṣanto 'har ahaḥ prītā mukunda-vadanāmbujam
nityaṁ pramuditaṁ śrīmat sa-daya-smita-vīkṣaṇam

The members of these clans, protected by the arms of Kṛṣṇa and Saṅkarṣaṇa, felt that all their desires were fulfilled. Thus they enjoyed perfect happiness while living at home with their families. Because of the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they no longer suffered from the fever of material existence. Every day these loving devotees could see Mukunda's ever-cheerful lotus face, continually increasing in beauty and continually displaying compassionate, smiling glances.

COMMENTARY: Now they were more attractive than Indra. They were always full of the highest happiness without any sorrow. This is expressed in two verses. They were protected from all dangers by the four arms of Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān, and his second form Balarāma, or his best servant, Ananta, the cause of the Yadu dynasty. Or "arms" is in the plural because out of affection they sometimes manifested many arms. Arms were most effective in protecting. By their strength, all their desires were fulfilled. Though living in their houses, they were liberated (*siddhāḥ*) in their bodies. Or all their purposes were fulfilled (*siddhāḥ*) and they played (*remire*) in their houses. Though householders, they did not experience any suffering of *saṁsāra* at all. *Kṛṣṇa* means he who takes away all suffering. *Rāma* means he who gives enjoyment. Because of the two, they were without old age.

They attained the highest bliss. They saw his face at close hand (*vīkṣantaḥ*). The present tense is used to indicate that they had an immediate experience of his qualities and they continually looked. They were pleased by his ever-fresh qualities. They saw continually. This was their special fortune. Or, they enjoyed (*remire*) continually. Or *prītāḥ* is the final statement. Continually his face was overjoyed, having inner joy, not receiving any offenses (*pramuditam*). Thus, he was merciful (*sadaya*).

Text 45.19

tatra pravayaso 'py āsan yuvāno 'ti-balaujasaḥ
pibanto 'kṣair mukundasya mukhāmbuja-sudhāṁ muhuḥ

Even the most elderly inhabitants of the city appeared youthful, full of strength and vitality, for with their eyes they constantly drank the elixir of Mukunda's lotus face.

COMMENTARY: Their bodies were made of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Among them, generally they did not age since they were *avatāras* of associates of the Lord. Or some of the Andhakas, etc., were old in years, but youthful. They were eternally situated like this (*āsan*). They had physical strength (*bala*) and alert senses (*ojasaḥ*) or energy. They drank with their eyes the sweet beauty of his face. Their eyes were like cups for tasting the nectar, the highest bliss, which destroyed all *anarthas*. They did

this constantly, being very close at all times (*muhuḥ*). Or they were constantly youthful, with the strength of body and senses.

Text 45.20

atha nandaṁ samasādya bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
saṅkarṣaṇaś ca rājendra pariṣvajyedam ūcatuḥ

Then, O exalted Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, along with Balarāma, approached Nanda Mahārāja. The two Lords embraced him and then addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was delayed a few days in Mathurā to respect the city and console the Yadus, saying each day that he would return the next morning. Thus, after some time (*athaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa directly approached Nanda, going along with Vasudeva to the place where they left the carts. Or he spoke when Nanda came to Vasudeva's house.

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām
yad āha vaḥ samāgatya kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill his promise to you by coming back. SB 10.46.35

Thus he approached Nanda afterwards, not in the arena where he had killed Kaṁsa. He approached Nanda because he was filled with qualities like gratitude (*bhagavān*) and because he had appeared in this world as the son of Devakī, the *avatarī*. Or appearing as the son of Devakī, he manifested the highest qualities. Or though he was the son of Devakī, now he disregarded this identity, because he was Bhagavān.

Balarāma was considered non-different from the Yadus (SB 10.8.12). Thus, though Balarāma was the son of Vasudeva, he never considered himself separate from Nanda. O best of kings! You understand such dealings between relatives. Kṛṣṇa embraced Nanda out of natural affection and to pacify him at this time particularly. For a moment he was stunned, since he could not immediately state his intentions, since it would give suffering.

Text 45.21

pitar yuvābhyāṁ snigdhābhyāṁ poṣitau lālitau bhṛśam
pitror abhyadhikā prītir ātmajeṣv ātmano 'pi hi

[Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma said:] O Father, you and mother Yaśodā have affectionately maintained us and cared for us so much, since parents love their children more than themselves.

COMMENTARY: O father! He recognized Nanda as his father. Though Yaśodā was not present he remembered her with great affection, as if she were present (*yuvābhyām*). The boys were made blissful by the care and embraces of Nanda and Yaśodā because their affection was causeless, since (*hi*) parents have more affection for their offspring (*ātmajeṣu*) than for themselves. This negates the idea that they were only foster children, as suggested by the word *poṣitau* (nourished).

Text 45.22

sa pitā sā ca jananī yau puṣṇītāṁ sva-putra-vat
śiśūn bandhubhir utsṛṣṭān akalpaiḥ poṣa-rakṣaṇe

They are the real father and mother who care for, as they would their own sons, children abandoned by relatives unable to maintain and protect them.

COMMENTARY: The real father and mother are they who care for new born babies abandoned by their relatives because of inability. They are not at fault. The pitiful condition of the babies is suggested.

Or even those who raise them are the father and mother. What to speak of you who have given birth to us. Vasudeva and Devakī only in a previous life raised us as sons.

Text 45.23

yāta yūyaṁ vrajaṁn tāta vayaṁ ca sneha-duḥkhitān
jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo vidhāya suhṛdāṁ sukham

Now you should all return to Vraja, dear father. We shall come to see you, our dear relatives who suffer in separation from us, as soon as we have given some happiness to your well-wishing friends.

COMMENTARY: He consoles Nanda. Go to Vraja. You, with the cowherds, return to Vraja. O father (*tāta)*! He invokes affection so that Nanda will follow his instructions. “We” refers to Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Uddhava and

others. Or the plural indicates politeness. I will come in the form of Balarāma.

We will come to see you, our relatives, suffering from separation at all times. The Yadus are not our relatives. You are more important than the Yadus. I will come because I cannot repay you. This is confirmed by statements like *na pāraye 'ham*: I cannot repay you. (SB 10.32.22) I will come to see you, not to pacify you fully, because you are suffering, since you have extreme affection for me. In separation, you long for me, and in seeing me you fear separation. You do not attain happiness in either not seeing or seeing me. It would be impossible to make them happy. This is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Text 45.24

evaṁ sāntvayya bhagavān nandaṁ sa-vrajam acyutaḥ
vāso-'laṅkāra-kupyādyair arhayām āsa sādaram

Thus consoling Nanda Mahārāja and the other men of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa, who was capable of doing anything and who would not fail to keep his promise, respectfully honored them with gifts of clothing, jewelry, household utensils and so on.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was able to console Nanda because he was able to do anything (*bhagavān*). As a son, he would not fail to fulfil his promise (*acyutaḥ*). He worshipped them with gifts to instill faith in his promise. Kṛṣṇa also consoled all those who accompanied him and honored them with gifts. He also sent messages of consolation to Yaśodā and others who stayed in Vraja and sent them gifts such as bell metal utensils (*kupya*) for milking the cows, etc. The word *ādyaiḥ* indicates excellent vehicles and other things. Though Vraja already had an abundance of wealth, they valued these gifts because they were given out of affection, like flowers and sandalwood offered out of affection. He worshipped Nanda and others respectfully (*sādaram*) or he honored Nanda who was attentive (*sādaram*) to what he said and what he offered, who was pleased with the offerings because of

the affection. He brought Vasudeva, Ugrasena and others and had them do the worship. By proximity he was the cause of the worship.

Text 45.25

ity uktas tau pariṣvajya nandaḥ praṇaya-vihvalaḥ
pūrayann aśrubhir netre saha gopair vrajaṁ yayau

Nanda Mahārāja was overwhelmed with affection upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's words, and his eyes brimmed with tears as he embraced the two Lords. Then he went back to Vraja with the cowherd men.

COMMENTARY: Though Nanda had been instructed to go, Kṛṣṇa had promised to return to Vraja. Thus Nanda was filled with affection. He embraced Kṛṣṇa tightly, with continuous tears. Cries of pain, stumbling and fainting are also implied. Kṛṣṇa embraced each of the cowherds one after the other, or simultaneously by his power. Thus, they were all overcome with *prema*. Or *praṇaya-vihvala* means crying. Crying, he made all the cowherds and the Yadus cry. He went along with Vasudeva and Ugrasena, who accompanied him. Because of the affection, Nanda, with the cowherds, could not disobey Kṛṣṇa's instruction.

O Yaśodā, queen of Vraja! I continually lament. How could you maintain your life without Kṛṣṇa, when Nanda had also gone?

Text 45.26

atha śūra-suto rājan putrayoḥ samakārayat
purodhasā brāhmaṇaiś ca yathāvad dvija-saṁskṛtim

My dear King, then Vasudeva, the son of Śūrasena, arranged for a priest and other *brāhmaṇas* to perform his two sons' second-birth initiation.

COMMENTARY: After Nanda had departed for Vraja, Vasudeva performed the *saṁskāra*, since he had to do it with his sons present in Mathurā. Vasudeva performed the ceremony with his father named Śūra. That is suggested by the phrase *śūra-sutaḥ* (the son of Śūra). Śūra also suggests a capacity for all things. This was done according to the rules. O King! As a *kṣatriya* you know this procedure. Explaining the details is not necessary. Or Vasudeva was shining (*rājan*) because of great joy. Rohiṇī was brought from Vraja.

Text 45.27

tebhyo 'dād dakṣiṇā gāvo rukma-mālāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtebhyaḥ sampūjya sa-vatsāḥ kṣauma-mālinīḥ

Vasudeva worshipped the *brāhmaṇas* and, after offering them ornaments, gave them well-ornamented cows with their calves. All these cows wore gold necklaces and linen wreaths.

COMMENTARY: He worshipped the *brāhmaṇas* according to the rules (*sampūjya*) with the finest ornaments, with faith.

Text 45.28

yāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-janmarkṣe mano-dattā mahā-matiḥ
tāś cādadād anusmṛtya kaṁsenādharmato hṛtāḥ

The magnanimous Vasudeva then remembered the cows he had mentally given away on the occasion of Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's birth. Kaṁsa had stolen those cows, and Vasudeva now recovered them and gave them away in charity also.

COMMENTARY: *Kṛṣṇa-rāma-janmarkṣe* refers to the time of the birth of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Hearing of Balarāma's birth, Vasudeva also had given cows mentally as he did at Kṛṣṇa's birth (SB 10.3.11). He also had heard of the birth of Balarāma and had donated mentally at that time. He gave because he was generous (*mahā-matiḥ*). He gave now because of remembering his previous mental giving.

Text 45.29

tataś ca labdha-saṁskārau dvijatvaṁ prāpya su-vratau
gargād yadu-kulācāryād gāyatraṁ vratam āsthitau

After attaining twice-born status through initiation, the Lords, sincere in their vows, took the further vow of celibacy from Garga Muni, the spiritual master of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY: *Suvratau* means they followed the procedures described in *tantra*. They accepted the vow of giving everything. Garga instructed them on the *brahmacarya* vow. He taught the boys about *gāyatra* (*sāvitra*), *prājāpatya* and *brāhma brahmacārī* vows. *The gāyatra* vow means three

days of study. *Prājāpatya* means *brahmacārī* vows for one year, the beginning of studying the Vedas. *Brāhma* means vows until the Vedas are completely studied.[1] Śrīdhara Svāmī says that in this case the word *gāyatra* simply means general observance of *brahmacarya.* They were fixed in their vows (*suvratau*).

Texts 45.30–31

prabhavau sarva-vidyānāṁ sarva-jñau jagad-īśvarau
nānya-siddhāmalaṁ jñānaṁ gūhamānau narehitaiḥ
atho guru-kule vāsam icchantāv upajagmatuḥ
kāśyaṁ sāndīpaniṁ nāma hy avanti-pura-vāsinam

Concealing their innately perfect knowledge by their humanlike activities, those two omniscient Lords of the universe, themselves the origin of all branches of knowledge, next desired to reside at the school of a spiritual master. Thus they approached Sāndīpani Muni, a native of Kāsī living in the city of Avantī.

COMMENTARY: Though they were masters of all knowledge they went to the gurukula to teach others. After that, or for that reason (*atha*), they desired to go the *gurukula*. At the time of the *upanāyanam* they did not have this desire, since it would cause pain from separation and was of no particular use. They went to the guru's *āśrama* by chariot. That is mentioned later. Sāndīpani was born in Kāśī. Thus he studied all scriptures there. Sāndīpani means "the son of he who reveals all knowledge." Avantīpura was situated between Mathurā and Dvārakā. Thus he chose that place.

Text 45.32

yathopasādya tau dāntau gurau vṛttim aninditām
grāhayantāv upetau sma bhaktyā devam ivādṛtau

According to the rules they approached the guru, and with controlled senses, accepting faultless conduct towards the guru, respecting him as the Lord, they performed service with devotion.

COMMENTARY: They were controlled, and acted according to scriptures (*yathā*), which explain that one should approach with *kuśa* in one's hands. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

nivedya gotraṁ svādhyāyām ācāreṇābhyalaṁkṛtau
śuśrūśū nirahaṁkārāv ubhau rāmajanārdanau

Announcing their name and *gotra,* the two boys showed the best conduct in studies and without pride served the guru.

Vṛttim means conduct or living. They respected him as the Supreme Lord or they were respected like the Lord by the guru. The word *sma* indicates that their conduct was well known.

Text 45.33

tayor dvija-varas tuṣṭaḥ śuddha-bhāvānuvṛttibhiḥ
provāca vedān akhilān sāṅgopaniṣado guruḥ

That best of *brāhmaṇas*, the spiritual master Sāndīpani, was satisfied with their devotional behavior, and thus he taught them the entire Vedas with its *aṅgas*, together with the Upaniṣads.

COMMENTARY: He was satisfied by their actions conducted with *bhakti* (*śuddha-bhāva*). This will be explained later by the Lord in the story of Śrīdāmā and therefore is not explained by Śukadeva here. They learned the four Vedas. He was famous as a teacher (*guruḥ*) or was accepted as *ācārya* (*guruḥ*). Thus he spoke with great affection (*provāca*). And he taught them not like he taught other students. He taught them as *kṣatriyas*.

Text 45.34-35

sa-rahasyaṁ dhanur-vedaṁ dharmān nyāya-pathāṁs tathā
tathā cānvīkṣikīṁ vidyāṁ rāja-nītiṁ ca ṣaḍ-vidhām
sarvaṁ nara-vara-śreṣṭhau sarva-vidyā-pravartakau
sakṛn nigada-mātreṇa tau sañjagṛhatur nṛpa

He also taught them the Dhanur-veda, with its most confidential secrets; the standard books of law; the methods of logical reasoning and philosophical debate; and the sixfold science of politics. O King, those best of persons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being themselves the original promulgators of all varieties of knowledge, could immediately assimilate each and every subject after hearing it explained just once.

COMMENTARY: *Nyāya* and *anvīkṣī* are listed separately since *nyāyā* is logic following conclusions of scripture. *Anvīkṣī* is simply arguing, though using

scripture. It is called *vidyā* or a method for attracting the public. The word *ca* indicates other things as well. The list is in order of important to less important subjects, but all are important in speaking.

Or the word *ca* means *api*. They learned not only military arts but dharma, logic, etc. Though not necessary, they learned to teach the public. By uttering just once, they learned completely, since they were to be worshipped by all *devatās* (*amara-śreṣṭhau* instead of *nara-vara-śresṭhau*) and they were the creators and maintainers of all knowledge.

Or they were the initiators of all knowledge. To teach others only, they made an appearance of learning. O King! Śukadeva expresses joy because they learned quickly, and would serve their guru at the completion of their studies.

Text 45.36

aho-rātraiś catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā saṁyattau tāvatīḥ kalāḥ
guru-dakṣiṇayācāryaṁ chandayām āsatur nṛpa

They learned the sixty-four arts and skills in as many days and nights. Thereafter, O King, They satisfied their spiritual master by offering him guru-dakṣiṇā.

COMMENTARY: They studied even during the night. They learned the Vedas while following the rules such as service to the guru (*saṁyattau*), in sixty-four days, and other subjects in several more days and nights. Or this verse explains the previous statement that they learned in a few days. Some *kalās* are *kalpa-saṁhitās.* One of them can be learned in one day and night, but in a general way only. Other *kalās* are more complex works. Or all the *kalās* were mastered in sixty-four days and nights.

sarahasyaṁ dhanur-vedaṁ sa-saṁgraham adhīyatām
aho-rātraiś catuḥ-ṣaṣṭyā tad adbhutam abhūd dvūja

O *brāhmaṇa*! It is astonishing that in sixty-four days and nights they learned the Dhanur-veda and all other works. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

tau ca śrutidharau vīrau yathāvat pratipadyatām
ahorātraiś catuḥṣaṣṭyā sāṅgaṁ vedam adhīyatām

The two boys with full retention of memory, learned all the Vedas and their *aṅgas* in sixty-four days and nights. *Hari-vaṁśa*

They offered him a donation, though he did not want it. O King! Śukadeva exclaims in astonishment.

Text 45.37

dvijas tayos taṁ mahimānam adbhutaṁ
saṁlokṣya rājann ati-mānusīṁ matim
sammantrya patnyā sa mahārṇave mṛtaṁ
bālaṁ prabhāse varayāṁ babhūva ha

O King, the learned *brāhmaṇa* Sāndīpani carefully considered the two Lords' glorious and amazing qualities and their superhuman intelligence. Then, after consulting with his wife, he chose as his remuneration the return of his young son, who had died in the ocean at Prabhāsa.

COMMENTARY: The intelligent *brāhmaṇa* (*dvijaḥ*) saw the astonishing greatness of the two boys, who in a very short time could absorb unlimited knowledge, which he thought (*matim*) was beyond human ability. Or he saw their greatness and their intelligence endowed with great qualities. He consulted with his wife because of wondering what to request, or because he had affection for her. Their son, while playing in the water when they went on pilgrimage, had been swallowed by Śaṅkhāsura. The word *ha* indicates joy because the Lord would show his greatness in surpassing death and *prārabdha-karma.* O King! Śukadeva calls out in astonishment at the request. Or *rājan* means the *brāhmaṇa* shone.

Text 45.38

tathety athāruhya mahā-rathau rathaṁ
prabhāsam āsādya duranta-vikramau
velām upavrajya niṣīdatuḥ kṣanaṁ
sindhur viditvārhanam āharat tayoḥ

"So be it," replied those two great charioteers of limitless might, and they at once mounted their chariot and set off for Prabhāsa. When they reached that place, they walked up to the shore and sat down. In a

moment the deity of the ocean, recognizing them to be the Supreme Lords, approached them with offerings of tribute.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They accepted his request (*tathā*). Immediately (*atha*) they mounted the chariot. *Mahārathau* means they were the best of warriors equipped with all weapons. They could defeat unlimited enemies (*duranta-vikramau*). They arrived at the shore of the ocean. Another version has *niṣedatuḥ.* The ocean offered gifts such as valuable jewels.

Text 45.39

tam āha bhagavān āśu guru-putraḥ pradīyatām
yo 'sāv iha tvayā grasto bālako mahatormiṇā

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the lord of the ocean: Let the son of my guru be presented at once—the one you seized here with your mighty waves.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa then showed his powers (*bhagavān*). The son should be delivered here with the same body, without ageing or decaying (*pra-dīyatām*). Because you are a *devatā,* this is possible for you to do. You devoured him here in Prabhāsa (*iha*). Since he was seized by your waves, this accidental death means he has a remainder of his life span.

Text 45.40

śrī-samudra uvāca
na cāhārṣam ahaṁ deva daityaḥ pañcajano mahān
antar-jala-caraḥ kṛṣṇa śaṅkha-rūpa-dharo 'suraḥ

The ocean replied: O Kṛṣṇa, it was not I who abducted him, but a demonic descendant of Diti named Pañcajana, who travels in the water in the form of a conch.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Some versions have *samudra uvāca* and some do not. The commentators are not clear on this. Instead of *na ca* sometimes *naiva* is seen at the

beginning of the verse. O Lord who engages in play (*deva*)! Since you know everything, giving the order is only your play. Pañcajana is a great demon (*daityaḥ*). Instead of *daityaḥ*, Śrīdhara Svāmī seems to have the word *asuraḥ* in his version. The verb *āste* should be supplied in the last line. However, the verb for the last line is in the first two lines of the next verse *(āste*), which is seen only in some versions. The word *prabhuḥ* should be added as the subject if the version does not have the first two lines of the next verse. O Kṛṣṇa, it is not difficult for you to capture this demon since you possess the power to attract everyone.

Text 45.41

āste tenāhṛto nūnaṁ tac chrutvā satvaraṁ prabhuḥ
jalam āviśya taṁ hatvā nāpaśyad udare 'rbhakam

The ocean said, "That demon has taken him away." Hearing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the ocean, found Pañcajana and killed him. But the Lord did not find the boy within the demon's belly.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The last line of this verse is spoken by Śukadeva. He entered the waters which quivered in fear. He could not even find the bones of the boy in the belly of the demon. He searched, thinking, "Even if I obtain the bones, by the grace of guru, I can bring the boy back to life." He acted in this way to show worldly pastimes to the ocean. Singular is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa entered alone. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

ity uktvontarjalaṁ gatvā hatvā pañcajanaṁ ca tam
kṛṣṇo jagrāha tasyāsthi prabhavaṁ śaṅkham uttamam

When the ocean spoke thus, Kṛṣṇa entered the water and killed Pañcajana. He took his shell which was the best of powerful conches, arising from his bones.

Balarāma remained on the shore to protect the chariot.

Texts 45.42–44

tad-aṅga-prabhavaṁ śaṅkham ādāya ratham āgamat
tataḥ saṁyamanīṁ nāma yamasya dayitāṁ purīm

gatvā janārdanaḥ śaṅkhaṁ pradadhmau sa-halāyudhaḥ
śaṅkha-nirhrādam ākarṇya prajā-saṁyamano yamaḥ
tayoḥ saparyāṁ mahatīṁ cakre bhakty-upabṛṁhitām
uvācāvanataḥ kṛṣṇaṁ sarva-bhūtāśayālayam
līlā-manuṣyayor viṣṇo yuvayoḥ karavāma kim

Janārdana took the conch shell that had grown around the demon's body and went back to the chariot. Then he proceeded to Saṁyamanī, the beloved capital of Yamarāja, the lord of death. Upon arriving there with Balarāma, he loudly blew his conch shell, and Yamarāja, who keeps the conditioned souls in check, came as soon as he heard the resounding vibration. Yamarāja elaborately worshiped the two Lords with great devotion, and then he addressed Kṛṣṇa, who lives in everyone's heart: "O Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, what shall I do for you two, who are playing the part of ordinary humans?"

COMMENTARY: The conch is actually the eternal associate of the Lord. By a curse of a *brāhmaṇa* he took the role of a demon, like Jaya and Vijaya. Seeing Kṛṣṇa coming from far off, Yama thought that death was approaching. The place was dear to Yama because he lived there with his associates. Balarāma manifested his club for fighting. As best of devotees and king of dharma, Yama was expected to worship the Lord in his house. (*Janardana* means he who has expectations from people). Kṛṣṇa blew the conch loudly (*pra-dadhmau*). The citizens were persons who had committed sins. Yama was their punisher (*saṁyamanaḥ*). He was thus fearsome. Or since his authority was given by the Lord, he was defeated in battle. This is understood from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa:*

taṁ pāñcajanyam āpūrya gatvā yamapuraṁ hariḥ
baladevaś ca balavāñ jitvā vaivasvataṁ yamam
taṁ bālaṁ yātanā-saṁsthaṁ yathā pūrva-śarīriṇam
pitre pradattavān kṛṣṇo balaś ca balināṁ varaḥ

Blowing the conch and going to Yama's abode, strong Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma defeated strong Yama, whose abode was filled with painful torture. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, best of the strong, gave the boy, along with his previous body, to his father.

tato vaivasvataṁ daivaṁ nirjitya puruṣottamaḥ
āninīya guroh putraṁ ciranaṣṭaṁ yamakṣayāt

The Lord, after defeating Yama, took his guru's son, who had not died, from Yama's abode. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Or he is the person who controls all beings (*saṁyamanaḥ*), purifying them and establishing rules by giving results of *dharma* and *adharma*. He is thus completely proper in giving benefit to the people. Thus he worshipped the two with increased *bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa dwells in everyone's heart. The Lord will think, "He is my devotee. In order to see me, he has brought the guru's dead son here. He has committed no offense." Thus Kṛṣṇa will be merciful to me.

Yama speaks to Kṛṣṇa since he is the main person. O Lord who pervades everywhere (*viṣṇo*)! I am your servant. What can I do for you two? He recognizes Balarāma' position as an elder brother. You have human forms full of pastimes or you are humans for performing pastimes. Please tell me what we can do for you. The plural is used to indicate his followers also. Or what can we do? Since you are complete, as the Lord, we can give you nothing. The plural is used to indicate his senses.

Text 45.45

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
guru-putram ihānītaṁ nija-karma-nibandhanam
ānayasva mahā-rāja mac-chāsana-puraskṛtaḥ

The Lord said: Suffering the bondage of his past activity, my spiritual master's son was brought here to you. O great King, obey my command and bring this boy to me without delay.

COMMENTARY: Though the boy must suffer his karma, bring him here. Yama was not at fault in bringing him to hell, since the boy had *prārabdha-karmas.* O great king! Because you are the king of dharma, you can surpass karma by devotion to me. You know the principles of dharma.

"The rules will be broken." Just follow my orders. The meaning is this. Bringing the boy here was my order, and now bringing the boy to me is my order. But since you are my devotee, you must follow my order given directly at this time. O great king! For my devotee I override the rules. You

know this. Or O great king of following my order! You obey my orders. It is always more important to follow my order concerning my devotees than following the normal rules.

Text 45.46

tatheti tenopānītaṁ guru-putraṁ yadūttamau
dattvā sva-gurave bhūyo vṛṇīṣveti tam ūcatuḥ

Yamarāja said, "So be it," and brought forth the guru's son. Then those two most exalted Yadus presented the boy to their spiritual master and said to him, "Please select another boon."

COMMENTARY: When Yama agreed, he brought the son of the guru near (*upa*) or as an offering. They gave him to their guru. Or he brought the boy in the same body with which he died (*upa*). They also gave him jewels mentioned before. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

tataḥ sāṁdīpaneḥ putraṁ tad rūpa-vayasaṁ tadā
prādāt kṛṣṇaḥ pratītāya saha ratnair udāradhīḥ

Kṛṣṇa delivered the son of Sāndīpani with his previous form and age, along with jewels from the ocean.

The phrase *sva-gurave* (to his own guru) indicates that Kṛṣṇa had great devotion to him. Again, they said, "Choose another gift." This was natural to them since they were the best of the Yadus. They had appeared in the Yadu dynasty, in order to preach proper dharma.

Text 45.47

śrī-gurur uvāca
samyak sampādito vatsa bhavadbhyāṁ guru-niṣkrayaḥ
ko nu yuṣmad-vidha-guroḥ kāmānām avaśiṣyate

The spiritual master said: My dear boys, you two have completely fulfilled the disciple's obligation to reward his spiritual master. With disciples like you, what further desires could a guru have?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He calls out to Kṛṣṇa alone (*vatsa*) because of greater affection for him. What desire remains for a guru who has disciples similar to you? And what desire could remain for a guru who actually had you as disciples?

Text 45.48

gacchataṁ sva-gṛhaṁ vīrau kīrtir vām astu pāvanī
chandāṁsy ayāta-yāmāni bhavantv iha paratra ca

O heroes, now please return home. May your fame sanctify the world, and may the Vedic hymns be ever fresh in your minds, both in this life and the next.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Even though my house is your house, go to your house in Mathurā out of conventional identity. *Sva-gṛhe* is an alternative version. O heroes (*vīrau*)! You are heroes because of such gifts and such bravery. As the two boys, offering respects, were going, he gave blessings. May you have purifying fame.

Text 45.49

guruṇaivam anujñātau rathenānila-raṁhasā
āyātau sva-puraṁ tāta parjanya-ninadena vai

O son! Thus receiving their guru's permission to leave, the two Lords returned to their city on their chariot, which moved as swiftly as the wind and resounded like a cloud.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Anujñātau sva-guruṇā is another version. *Sva-puram* (their own city) indicates affection with possessiveness for Mathurā. They arrived swiftly, like the wind, with the sound of the chariot rumbling like a cloud. Hearing the sound from far off, everyone came out to greet them. Śukadeva exclaims, "O son (*tāta*)!" out of great joy.

Text 45.50

samanandan prajāḥ sarvā dṛṣṭvā rāma-janārdanau
apaśyantyo bahv ahāni naṣṭa-labdha-dhanā iva

All the citizens rejoiced upon seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, whom they had not seen for many days. The people felt just like those who have lost their wealth and then regained it.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The residents of Mathurā and others as well were overjoyed. Some saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on the road and others had come to the city. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

tataḥ pratyutthitāḥ sarve yādavā yadu-nandanau
sabālā hṛṣṭa-manasa ugrasena-purogamāḥ
śreṇyaḥ prakṛtayaś caiva mantriṇo 'tha purohitāḥ
sa-bāla-vṛddhā sā caiva purī samabhivartata
nandi-tūryāṇy avādyanta tuṣṭuvuś ca janārdanam
rathyāḥ patākā-mālinyo bhrājanti sma samantataḥ
prahṛṣṭa-muditaṁ sarvam antaḥpuram aśobhata
govindāgamane 'tyarthaṁ yathaivendra-makhe tathā
muditāś cāpy agāyanta rāja-mārgeṣu gāyanāḥ
jayaśīḥ prathamā gāthā yādavānāṁ priyaṁkarāḥ
govinda-rāmau saṁprāptau bhrātarau loka-viśrutau
sve pure nirbhayāḥ sarve krīḍanti saha bāndhavaiḥ
na tatra kaś cid dīno vā malino vā vicetanaḥ
mathurāyāṁ babhau rājan govinde samupasthite
vayāṁsi sādhu-vākyāni prahṛṣṭā go-haya-dvipāḥ
nara-nārī-gaṇāḥ sarve bhejire manasaḥ sukham
śivāś ca vātāḥ pravavur virajaskā diśo daśa
daivatāni ca sarvāṇi hṛṣṭāny āyataneṣv api
yāni liṅgāni lokasya babhuḥ kṛtayuge purā
tāni sarvāṇy adṛśyanta purīṁ prāpte janārdane

All the Yadus rose to greet Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. With Ugrasena in front along with the army, with joyous minds, the artisans, princes, ministers, and priests, along with the young and old, approached. Musical instruments played, satisfying Kṛṣṇa. The streets shone with flags and

garlands everywhere. The palace was completely joyous with the arrival of Govinda, as at a sacrifice for Indra. Joyful minstrels, dear to the Yadus, sang the foremost songs of victory on the main roads. When the famous brothers Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma arrived, all the citizens played with their friends without fear. There was no misery, contamination or lifelessness in that city when Kṛṣṇa arrived in Mathurā, O King! The birds sang sweetly. The cows, horses, and elephants were jubilant. All men and women had contented minds. Auspicious, pure wind blew in all directions. All the *devatās* were happy in their abodes. All the symptoms of Satya-yuga appeared when Kṛṣṇa arrived in the city.

---

[1] SB 3.12.42

Chapter Forty-six
Uddhava Visits Vṛndāvana

Text 46.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
vṛṣṇīnāṁ pravaro mantrī kṛṣṇasya dayitaḥ sakhā
śiṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād uddhavo buddhi-sattamaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The supremely intelligent Uddhava was the best the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, a counselor, beloved of Kṛṣṇa, his intimate friend and a direct disciple of Bṛhaspati.

COMMENTARY: In sorrow, with hopeless heart, I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the only shelter for those suffering, to suffering people of Vraja, and to Uddhava who alleviated their suffering.

Having concluded necessary rites, and to make his words come true in which he promised to return (SB 10.39.35, 10.45.23), he desired to return, but he remained in the city to benefit his relatives, by comforting the Pāṇḍavas and killing Jarāsandha. First he comforted the people of Vraja through his dear friend, equal to himself. This is related in two chapters.

Among the Yādavas, Uddhava was respected by all for his great intelligence. He was able to pacify the people of Vraja, possessing various *rasas*, endowed with various *bhāvas*, among children, elders and youths. Moreover, he gave intimate advice (*mantrī*) as a special minister. Or by agreement of the Yadus, he had the power of advising. By his nature he had perfection in all mantras. This means he could control everyone. He was moreover the dear friend of Kṛṣṇa, who attracted everyone's heart. He was also of the same age as Kṛṣṇa, and could create complete trust. Therefore he was suitable to send to places where Kṛṣṇa could go.

Or he was like a younger brother, a friend and assistant (*dayitaḥ*). Always associating with Kṛṣṇa, he knew his mood. Moreover, he was the direct disciple of Bṛhaspati, rather than a student of Bṛhaspati's student. Thus he knew all scriptures and was most eloquent. He was most intelligent. Like the Lord he was endowed with six qualities. He was the son of Devabhāga, brother of Vasudeva. Uddhava also means festival personified. The list of

his qualities is one of causing the other. These will be revealed in his talks. Thus he was qualified to send to Vraja.

Text 46.2

tam āha bhagavān preṣṭhaṁ bhaktam ekāntinaṁ kvacit
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prapannārti-haro hariḥ

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who relieves the distress of all who surrender to him, once took the hand of his fully devoted, dearest friend Uddhava and addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: At some time, when he began thinking of Vraja, or at some place (*kvacit*), Kṛṣṇa spoke to Uddhava. Uddhava was qualified to reveal confidential matters to the *gopīs,* and Nanda and Yaśodā. His qualities are described in more detail than in the previous verse. He was dearest (*preṣṭham*). He was a great devotee from childhood.

yaḥ pañca-hāyano mātrā prātar-āśāya yācitaḥ
tan naicchad racayan yasya saparyāṁ bāla-līlayā

Making an image of Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava used to offer items of worship to it, and when his mother called him for breakfast, he did not want to eat while his worship was incomplete. SB 3.2.2

He was completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa (*ekāntinam*). Or he was a fixed only on Kṛṣṇa as a devotee (*ekāntinam bhaktam*).

vihāya pita-devādīn pariniṣṭhāṁ gato harau
tad gāḍha premabhiḥ pūrṇa ekāntīti nigadyate

That person who gives up the worship of Pitṛs and *devatās,* who surrenders to the Lord and who is filled with the deepest types of *prema* for the Lord is called the *ekānta* devotee.

The cause is explained. Kṛṣṇa was by nature most merciful (*bhagavān*). He removes the suffering of the devotees. Or since he takes way the suffering of those who are surrendered by saying “I am yours” how much more he will do for the people of Vraja, since he is Hari.

He took Uddhava’s hand in his hand in order to invoke his love, to fulfill his desire or in order to speak secretly, very close. Or it was a natural expression of deep *prema* when he was about to speak.

Text 46.3

gacchoddhava vrajaṁ saumya pitror naḥ prītim āvaha
gopīnāṁ mad-viyogādhiṁ mat-sandeśair vimocaya

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear gentle Uddhava, go to Vraja and give pleasure to our parents. And also relieve the *gopīs,* suffering in separation from me, by giving them my message.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa uses the plural form *naḥ* (our) to show respect as their son. Or he uses the plural (Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Uddhava) to increase Uddhava's affection for them by showing that his mother and father are also ideal parents for persons like Uddhava. Another version has *nau*. Then it refers to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (dual). Positively produce (*ā-vaha*) happiness in my parents who are suffering separation from me, by your skill, as if by force, since it will be difficult to make them happy in my absence. Or, produce happiness so it is continuous like a river (*ā-vaha*), so that even later their happiness remains. "How will a fool like me be able to do this?" Kṛṣṇa thus called out "O Uddhava!" You are Uddhava, an ocean of good qualities, which were described in verse 1.

Uddhava also means "joy." You are also peacefulness incarnate (*saumya*), or most attractive. Forget about your skills. Just by seeing you, they will become happy. He addresses Uddhava to give him enthusiasm. Especially free (*vi-mocaya)* the *gopīs* from the pain of separation. Free them from that pain which is firmly fixed in their hearts like a knot, so that it will not touch them again. You can only free them from pain and not give them happiness. You should do this through my message and not through your clever words, and not by making two or three attempts.

Text 46.4

tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā mad-arthe tyakta-daihikāḥ
mām eva dayitaṁ preṣṭham ātmānaṁ manasā gatāḥ
ye tyakta-loka-dharmāś ca mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham

The minds of those *gopīs* are always absorbed in me, and their very lives are ever devoted to me. For my sake they have abandoned everything

related to their bodies, as well as dharma and other people. I alone am their dear beloved and, indeed, their very self. Therefore I take it upon myself to sustain them in all circumstances.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In regards to delivering the message to the *gopīs*, first he describes the *gopīs'* general condition in order to then speak of the cause, by describing their particular condition in two lines. Through three descriptive phrases he says that except for him they are indifferent to the unlimited goals of dharma, to their bodies and to other people. Concerning their bodies, they have given up husbands, children, eating and drinking. They have dedicated their minds to me. Thus they have no interest in external sense enjoyment. They take me as their very life. Thus they have no interest in internal objects of enjoyment. It is said:

bhoktṛtve sukha-duḥkhānāṁ puruṣaṁ prakṛteḥ param

They say that *ātmā,* superior to *prakṛti*, is the cause of enjoyment and suffering of the *jīva.* SB 3.26.8

Thus *mad-arthe* (for me) indicates that since all material enjoyment is ultimately caused by *ātmā* (the identity of themselves), they have become indifferent to *ātmā,* their selves. The cause of their sacrifice is then stated. They take me as their beloved in their minds. They do not take external objects as dear. More than that, they take me alone as most dear (*preṣṭham*). They do not take internal objects such as *prāṇa* as dearest, since in my absence they have no interest in these things. They take me alone, and not their own *ātmās*, as their dearest self since in my absence they consider their ātmās completely vacant. They experience no pleasure within their ātmās for any other being in my absence. By these three phrases he indicates to Uddhava that they take Kṛṣṇa alone as their husband. They do not consider those who are said to be their husbands to be their real husbands.

The *gopīs* will say *api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro 'dhunāste*: it is indeed regrettable that Kṛṣṇa, our husband, resides in Mathurā. (SB 10.47.21) This line is included in many versions, but Śrīdhara Svāmī does

not seem to accept it, since he does not explain the difficult phrase *ārya-putraḥ.*

I will support those persons who give up regard for dharma and people to surrender to me. This is a general statement (including not only the *gopīs*), to express his obligation to support anyone without regard for their qualification, if they renounce for his sake. The word *ca* indicates the gopīs who have given up even their lives for him.

Or *man-manaskā* can mean "those who are in my mind at all times." *Mat-prāṇā* means "those who are my life" since they have given up everything related to their bodies. The cause of giving up everything is stated. They take me as most dear, as their very selves. If I am obligated to anyone (*ye)* who renounces for me, what to speak of the *gopīs*? Though I am the object of meditation for Brahmā, I support them within (*bibharmi*), or meditate on them. *Ādi Purāṇa* says:

bhaktā mamānuraktāś ca kati santi na bhūtale
kintu gopījanaḥ prāṇādhika piryatamo mama

There are many devotees and persons attracted to me on earth, but the *gopīs* are dearer to me than my life.

Because their suffering enters my mind, I always feel pain. Or I protect even those whom the *gopīs* reject such as their husbands, those nourishing their bodies by eating, and those women who are chaste and shy. Thus I should protect the *gopīs.*

Text 46.5

mayi tāḥ preyasāṁ preṣṭhe dūra-sthe gokula-striyaḥ
smarantyo ʼṅga vimuhyanti virahautkaṇṭhya-vihvalāḥ

My dear Uddhava, for those women of Gokula I am the most cherished object of love. Thus when they remember me, who am so far away, they are overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation.

COMMENTARY: Their pain is more than mine. That is expressed in two verses (5-6). These women of Gokula have indescribable love, and are dedicated fully to me. Being women living in Vraja, their love is greater than mine. Among all dear persons, I am dearest to them but live far away in Mathurā.

In great pain of separation, longing to see me, they remember me or the *rāsa* dance. Or they softly chant "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!" since it is impossible to forget me. They become completely bewildered or faint. They fall on the ground and remain there. O friend with limbs similar to mine (*aṅga*)! O dear friend! You alone can understand this.

Text 46.6

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

Simply because I have promised to return to them, my fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other.

COMMENTARY: He fears they are in great danger. They maintain their lives in suffering greater than death. With difficulty, they keep their life from leaving their bodies. This is generally so, but others become devoid of action, as if dead. Somehow, they maintain their lives. Out of shame for his promise, he makes a general statement. But then he reveals the meaning by saying that they live because of his promise to return. They never give up hope since they believe my words, being by nature full of soft *prema*, as my possessions (*me ballavyaḥ*). The three reasons for maintaining their lives are progressive in excellence (*madātmikāḥ* being the strongest.)

Or they are my offspring (*mad-ātmikāḥ*). Their pain is my pain. By delivering them from pain, I am delivered from pain. Or when I am situated far away from the pastimes of Vṛndāvana, they experience great suffering. Thus, they maintain their lives with great difficulty.

Or he gives direction on how to deliver the message. The present tense expresses the near future. Though with great difficulty, they will maintain their lives when you directly explain (*sandeśaiḥ)* that I will soon return to Vraja. That is the main message. More than for his parents, he makes arrangements for the *gopīs*. Though the same message is suitable for all the people of Vraja, the instruction is given for his parents and the *gopīs*. His friends in Vraja are not the recipients of this message, since they could come to Mathurā. Or this is an instruction for all the cowherd women, whether old or young.

taṁ nāga-bhoga-parivītam adṛṣṭa-ceṣṭam
ālokya tat-priya-sakhāḥ paśupā bhṛśārtāḥ
kṛṣṇe 'rpitātma-suhṛd-artha-kalatra-kāmā
duḥkhānuśoka-bhaya-mūḍha-dhiyo nipetuḥ

When the members of the cowherd community, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa as their dearest friend, who had offered him themselves, their friends, their wealth, their families and goals of life, saw him enveloped in the snake's coils, motionless, they were filled with pain. Overwhelmed by sorrow, lamentation and fear they fainted and fell on the ground. SB 10.16.10

Thus I also maintain the cowherds like Śrīdhāmā. But two verses point out the excellence of the *gopīs*.

Text 46.7

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity ukta uddhavo rājan sandeśaṁ bhartur ādṛtaḥ
ādāya ratham āruhya prayayau nanda-gokulam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, O King, Uddhava respectfully accepted his master's message, mounted his chariot and set off for Nanda-gokula.

COMMENTARY: O King! Śukadeva expresses joy on Kṛṣṇa's mercy to the people of Vraja. Or having been addressed, shining *(rājan*) with respect (*ādṛtaḥ*), he accepted the message. Or being respected with *prasāda* cloth to send him off, he accepted the message. Or being respected by being entrusted with taking the message, or being respected by his master (*bhartuḥ*), he accepted the message.

This is one reason why he shone. He accepted the message, holding it in his heart. Or he held the written message on his head to protect it. *Bhartuḥ* means he who nourishes. He mounted the chariot in order to go to Vraja quickly, to fulfil a greater desire than Akrūra's.

Text 46.8

prāpto nanda-vrajaṁ śrīmān nimlocati vibhāvasau
channa-yānaḥ praviśatāṁ paśūnāṁ khura-reṇubhiḥ

The fortunate Uddhava reached Nanda Mahārāja's pastures just as the sun was setting, and since the returning cows and other animals were raising dust with their hooves, his chariot passed unnoticed.

COMMENTARY: Nanda means he who gives joy. Gokula was similar. Uddhava was blissful with the great manifestation of *bhāva*. The chariot, shining with ornaments given by the Lord, was covered with dust raised by hooves of unlimited cows which were entering Vraja. The cow dust indicates an excellent condition.

Texts 46.9–13

vāsitārthe 'bhiyudhyadbhir nāditaṁ śuśmibhir vṛṣaiḥ
dhāvantībhiś ca vāsrābhir udho-bhāraiḥ sva-vatsakān
itas tato vilaṅghadbhir go-vatsair maṇḍitaṁ sitaiḥ
go-doha-śabdābhiravaṁ veṇūnāṁ niḥsvanena ca
gāyantībhiś ca karmāṇi śubhāni bala-kṛṣṇayoḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtābhir gopībhir gopaiś ca su-virājitam
agny-arkātithi-go-vipra- pitṛ-devārcanānvitaiḥ
dhūpa-dīpaiś ca mālyaiś ca gopāvāsair mano-ramam
sarvataḥ puṣpita-vanaṁ dvijāli-kula-nāditam
haṁsa-kāraṇḍavākīrṇaiḥ padma-ṣaṇḍaiś ca maṇḍitam

Gokula resounded on all sides with the sounds of bulls in the rut fighting with one another for fertile cows; with the mooing of cows, burdened by their udders, chasing after their calves; with the noise of milking and of the white calves jumping here and there; with the loud reverberation of flute-playing; and with the singing of the all-auspicious deeds of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma by the cowherd men and women, who made the village resplendent with their wonderfully ornamented attire. The cowherds' homes in Gokula appeared most charming with garlands, incense and lamps, for the worship of the sacrificial fire, the sun, unexpected guests, the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the forefathers and the demigods. On all sides lay the flowering forest, echoing with flocks of birds and swarms of bees and beautified by its lakes crowded with swans, kāraṇḍava ducks and bowers of lotuses.

COMMENTARY: Five verses describe the scene which gave joy to Uddhava. The cause of dust being raised is explained. There were sounds made by

fighting bulls. *Ca* indicates the cows were mooing. The calves were newly born (*vatsakān)*. Buffaloes are excluded in this description. The place was ornamented with white calves jumping about, or with cows running about, affectionate to their calves (*go-vatsaiḥ*). Though the cows and bulls were generally white, the new calves were especially white with purity. Having described the bliss of the animals, the activities of the cowherds are described. The sound of milking mixed with the sound of flutes (and other instruments not described). The flute sound can be connected with *nāditam* in verse 9.

The bliss of the *gopīs* is then described. They sang about the auspicious activities of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, while weeping with *prema* (*ca*). Though persons suffering greatly should not be causes of joy since they appear dirty and disturbed, they manifest indescribable beauty because of astonishing deep *prema* for the Lord in spite of the dirt, and attractiveness in spite of their deformity. The bliss because of the beauty of the *gopīs* is described. They decorated themselves nicely with ornaments sent by the Lord, in order to please him. They thought that when he came, he would see them and be happy. The cowherds were also ornamented (*ca*). This made everything especially beautiful (*su-virājitam*).

The bliss from a wealth of dharma is described. Fire and the sun were worshipped by daily fire sacrifices. Cows were worshipped by feeding them. Guests, *brāhmaṇas,* Pitṛs and *devatās* were worshipped by offerings. Or the first five are receptacles in which the Lord is worshipped. Worship of *pitṛs* and *devatās* is obligatory for householders. The houses were attractive with this worship. Though the people of Vraja are not obligated to this worship, being great devotees, like the Lord they perform these duties as pastimes. The bliss from the ingredients is described. The specific items are mentioned because of their auspiciousness. Flags and banners should also be included. The incense and garlands were for the worship or were decorations on the houses.

Having described the bliss of the village, the outer areas are described. Since Vṛndāvana is the shelter of everything, in all places there were flowering trees and creepers and lakes full of swans, ducks and lotuses. Previously, the joy of the cows and bulls was described. In the forests as

well, the animals were joyful. The cowherds thought that Kṛṣṇa would quickly return because of his words “I will come to see my relatives.”

Text 46.14

tam āgataṁ samāgamya kṛṣṇasyānucaraṁ priyam
nandaḥ prītaḥ pariṣvajya vāsudeva-dhiyārcayat

As soon as Uddhava, the dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa, arrived at Nanda Mahārāja’s door, Nanda came forward to meet him. The cowherd King embraced him in great happiness and worshiped him as nondifferent from Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY: When Uddhava arrived at the door, Nanda rose and met him. Since his chariot came unnoticed, he simply arrived without Nanda knowing beforehand. He was a dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa, or dear to Nanda. It is the nature of devotees to worship guests. Thus he treated him as the Lord. Or he thought that Kṛṣṇa had arrived.

Text 46.15

bhojitaṁ paramānnena saṁviṣṭaṁ kaśipau sukham
gata-śramaṁ paryapṛcchat pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ

After Uddhava had eaten first-class food, been seated comfortably on a bed and been relieved of his fatigue by a foot massage and other means, Nanda inquired from him as follows.

COMMENTARY: He fed Uddhava rice because it was the principal food, as well as dairy products and other foods. Uddhava was seated on a bed or stretched his body out on the bed. Nanda had others massage his feet or personally did it, and fanned him and offered sandalwood. When Uddhava’s fatigue was gone, Nanda inquired with lamentation.

Text 46.16

kaccid aṅga mahā-bhāga sakhā naḥ śūra-nandanaḥ
āste kuśaly apatyādyair yukto muktaḥ suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

[Nanda Mahārāja said:] My dear most fortunate one, does Vasudeva, the son of Śūra, fare well, now that he is free and has rejoined his children and other relatives?

COMMENTARY: Nanda asked about Vasudeva first since he was Kṛṣṇa's father and Nanda's friend. Or if he asked about Kṛṣṇa first he would be overcome with pain and would not be able to ask about other things after that. Or he asked the easy questions first since the questions about Kṛṣṇa would be extensive. Or he had many worries about his dear friend Vasudeva because of his affection and thus asked about him first.

O fortunate one! You are greatly fortunate because you are dear to Kṛṣṇa. We however are unfortunate since he gave us up. He does not mention Vasudeva's name directly because of his friendship and respect or because of natural affection. He also asks about children and wives (*ādyaiḥ*). Vasudeva has been freed from all dangers and joined with children and relatives. He is surrounded by the Yadus. He asks about the welfare of Kṛṣṇa by asking about the welfare of all the Yadus and family members like Devakī.

Text 46.17

diṣṭyā kaṁso hataḥ pāpaḥ sānugaḥ svena pāpmanā
sādhūnāṁ dharma-śīlānāṁ yadūnāṁ dveṣṭi yaḥ sadā

Fortunately, because of his own sins, the sinful Kaṁsa has been killed, along with all his brothers. He always hated the saintly and righteous Yadus.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In order to maintain self-control, Nanda praises the main cause of Vasudeva being freed, putting the direct topic of Kṛṣṇa at a distance temporarily. Since Kaṁsa died because he was sinful, there was no fault in killing him. His sin was hatred of those of proper conduct (innocent people), and those following dharma. Therefore we permitted Kṛṣṇa to go to Mathurā. He says this to satisfy Uddhava or console his own heart.

Text 46.18

api smarati naḥ kṛṣṇo mātaraṁ suhṛdaḥ sakhīn
gopān vrajaṁ cātma-nāthaṁ gāvo vṛndāvanaṁ girim

Does Kṛṣṇa remember us? Does he remember his mother and his friends and well-wishers? Does he remember the cowherds and their village of Vraja, of which he is the master? Does he remember the cows, Vṛndāvana forest and Govardhana Hill?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Not able to control himself for long, Nanda then asked directly what he wanted to ask. Does Kṛṣṇa, who attracts all hearts, who is my son, remember us? Did he not forget us? The plural is used (*naḥ*) to indicate Upananda and others also. It thus indicates Kṛṣṇa's affection for all. He mentions Yaśodā, since Nanda remembered her because of his pain on seeing her great sorrow.

Does he remember other cowherd relatives like maternal uncles, his companions like Śrīdāmā, the cowherds in general and also the *gopīs*, and Vraja, whose master is Kṛṣṇa (*ātma*). By being the master of Vraja he was naturally the master of everyone. *Gāvaḥ* should be *gāḥ.* He lists everyone from most important (Yaśodā) to less important (cows). Since it is included in Vṛndāvana, he mentions Govardhana after Vṛndāvana, though Govardhana is more important.

Or he mentions *naḥ* first because that came to his mind first. Then he remembered about Yaśodā, well-wishers and Kṛṣṇa's friends in that order because of proximity to himself, with the later persons further away in open areas. Then, unable to remember details, he asks about other cowherds and Vraja in general. After asking in general about Vraja, not able to think of the details, he then asks specifically about the cows. Does he constantly remember Vṛndāvana where he enjoyed and the cows with whom he enjoyed, though he has now given them up? In Vṛndāvana, does he remember the mountain he held up in his hand for seven days, while encouraging worship of himself—a desire tree with a wealth of happiness and a variety of pastimes? After killing Kaṁsa, who was only one person, he is now restricted in many ways. He must not be able to think about himself because of worrying about a safe place for the Yadus, bringing them here and there, in order to defend them from many wicked enemies,

such as followers of Kaṁsa's wives and the father of Kaṁsa's wives. In that condition how could he think of us?

Text 46.19

apy āyāsyati govindaḥ sva-janān sakṛd īkṣitum
tarhi drakṣyāma tad-vaktraṁ su-nasaṁ su-smitekṣaṇam

Will Govinda return even once to see his family? If he ever does, we may then glance upon his beautiful face, with its beautiful eyes, nose and smile.

COMMENTARY: Thinking that Kṛṣṇa, being intelligent and grateful, will remember them at all times, he asks another urgent question. He is the king of Gokula (*govindaḥ*). Thus he must return. He must see the people who are objects of his affection (*sva-janān*). He must see them at least once, since they are suffering. Will he satisfy them with his sweet words? Or will he come to see us once, not doing anything else? We expect to see him once, and not anywhere else. This is a statement made in misery.

"He sees everything. Even staying there, he sees you at all times. Why should he come here?" We will see his beautiful eyes, smile and nose. Though all his limbs are beautiful, the nose and eyes being the chief limbs are mentioned to represent all his limbs. By his coming, our desires will be fulfilled completely. Out of great longing, and loss of control Nanda utters "When will this be (*karh*i—instead of *tarhi*)?" Asking this question, they expect to see him in Vraja.

Text 46.20

dāvāgner vāta-varṣāc ca vṛṣa-sarpāc ca rakṣitāḥ
duratyayebhyo mṛtyubhyaḥ kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā

We were saved from the forest fire, the wind and rain, the bull and serpent demons—from all such insurmountable, deadly dangers—by that very great soul, Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Having described Kṛṣṇa's form with the desire to see him, he describes his qualities, somewhat lamenting. He describes these events since he personally experienced them. The snake refers to Kāliya and Aghāsura. These were equal to death. We are alive because he saved us.

He could save us because his nature is mercy (*su-mahātmanā*). We were saved because he is compassionate, not because of our qualities. This is a statement uttered in misery.

Text 46.21

smaratāṁ kṛṣṇa-vīryāṇi līlāpāṅga-nirīkṣitam
hasitaṁ bhāṣitaṁ cāṅga sarvā naḥ śithilāḥ kriyāḥ

As we remember the wonderful deeds Kṛṣṇa performed, his playful sidelong glances, his smiles and his words, O Uddhava, we forget all our material engagements.

COMMENTARY: After describing his pastimes, Nanda shows Kṛṣṇa's attractiveness, and his own misery.

We remember his astonishing deeds such as killing Pūtanā. The word Kṛṣṇa applies to all the elements listed (his glances, smiles and words) though it is in one compound only. *Līlā* means very playful. All of these elements were very attractive to the heart. The order is with increasing excellence (words being most attractive). This is clear from statements like the following.

madhurayā girā valgu-vākyayā
budha-manojñayā puṣkarekṣaṇa
vidhi-karīr imā vīra muhyatīr
adhara-sīdhunāpyāyayasva naḥ

O lotus-eyed one, by your sweet voice and charming words, which attract the minds of the intelligent, we have fainted. Our dear hero, please revive your maidservants with the nectar of your lips. SB 10.31.8

In speaking, the smiles and glances are also present. *Kriyāḥ* can also refer to *nitya-naimittika karmas* or acts such as eating. By this remembrance we become slow in executing duties. Or being distracted, we cannot complete our actions.

Text 46.22

saric-chaila-vanoddeśān mukunda-pada-bhūṣitān
ākrīḍān īkṣyamāṇānāṁ mano yāti tad-ātmatām

When we see the places where Mukunda enjoyed his sporting pastimes —the rivers, hills and forests he decorated with his feet—our minds become totally absorbed in him.

COMMENTARY: "You should give up remembering his activities." When we see rivers like Yamunā, hills like Govardhana or forested areas like Kāmyavana, ornamented with the footmarks of my son, who gives the highest bliss (*mukunda*), because he played there, our minds cannot give up thinking of him. Another version has *govinda*. As king of Gokula, he is the object of devotion for all people of Vraja. The footprints remained for a long time without disappearing.

sva-mūrtyā loka-lāvaṇya-nirmuktyā locanaṁ nṛṇām
gīrbhis tāḥ smaratāṁ cittaṁ padais tān īkṣatāṁ kriyāḥ

I have stolen people's eyes with my form which makes them reject all other beauty, stolen their voices and ears by my words, stolen their minds and stolen the movements of their bodies by the markings on my footprints. SB 11.1.6

Or seeing the various places of pastimes (*ākrīḍān*) decorated with his footprints, with a display of various types of beauty, our minds become filled with Mukunda.

Text 46.23

manye kṛṣṇaṁ ca rāmaṁ ca prāptāv iha surottamau
surāṇāṁ mahad-arthāya gargasya vacanaṁ yathā

In my opinion, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma must be two exalted devatās who have come to this planet to fulfill some great mission of the devatās. Such was foretold by Garga Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY: Overcome with pain, he considers that the cause of his pain is his affection, thinking of Kṛṣṇa as his son. In order to pacify his heart, he covers that conception of Kṛṣṇa as his son. Or he speaks in misery, thinking that he should be ignored because of his low position and Kṛṣṇa's high position. The two words *ca* indicate equal importance of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Both of them are most merciful and affectionate to their friends. But we are not worthy of being recognized. Having come to the material world (*iha prāptau*), they are Hari and Hara, Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa, or

the two outstanding members of the *catur-vyūha* for benefiting the *devatās* by relieving the burden of the earth. Should they not give benefit to us mortals as well?

Or among *devatās* they are the best *devatās* (*sūrānām surottamau*). They have appeared in this world to benefit the devotees (*mahad-arthāya*)—the Yadus, not us devotees. This is a statement of extreme misery. Or he made us happy by his pastimes but, by giving us up, has produced the opposite result. He must be some *devatā* with some other mission.

Garga has said:

tasmān nandātmajo 'yaṁ te nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ
śriyā kīrtyānubhāvena gopāyasva samāhitaḥ

In conclusion, therefore, O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa by his qualities, opulence, fame and influence. You should protect this child very carefully. SB 10.8.19

The two have come to Vraja to help the *devatās* by killing Pūtanā. They did not come to give us happiness, for by giving us up they have created great suffering. The previous happiness is just pain because of the extreme suffering.

Text 46.24

kaṁsaṁ nāgāyuta-prāṇaṁ mallau gaja-patiṁ yathā
avadhiṣṭāṁ līlayaiva paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ

After all, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed Kaṁsa, as well as the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa who was as strong as ten thousand elephants, just as a lion easily kills small animals.

COMMENTARY: The wrestlers and the elephant were as strong as ten thousand elephants. They were killed (*avadhiṣṭām*). This was done without effort (*līlayā eva*). This was suitable since he was like a lion among other animals.

Text 46.25

tāla-trayaṁ mahā-sāraṁ dhanur yaṣṭim ivebha-rāṭ
babhañjaikena hastena saptāham adadhād girim

With the ease of a royal elephant breaking a stick, Kṛṣṇa broke a powerful, giant bow three tālas long. He also held a mountain aloft for seven days with just one hand.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Tāla means a *tāla* tree which is 60 *hastas* high. Or, *Devakoṣa* says that a *tāla* is nine *vitastis* (9 inches x 9). He broke the bow like an elephant breaks a stick of sugar cane. He lifted the mountain with his left hand for seven days.

Text 46.26

pralambo dhenuko 'riṣṭas tṛṇāvarto bakādayaḥ
daityāḥ surāsura-jito hatā yeneha līlayā

Here in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily destroyed demons like Pralamba, Dhenuka, Arista, Tṛṇāvarta and Baka, who had themselves defeated both *devatās* and other demons.

COMMENTARY: *Ādi* refers to Keśī and other demons. It was said that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed the elephant and Kaṁsa (*avadhiṣṭām*). Because of their mutual affection, they are considered as one person, one helping the other. Three verses (24-26) describe how he helps the *devatās.* By lifting Govardhana he broke the pride of Indra. This was also for benefiting the *devatās.*

Text 46.27

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya nandaḥ kṛṣṇānurakta-dhīḥ
aty-utkaṇṭho 'bhavat tūṣṇīṁ prema-prasara-vihvalaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus intensely remembering Kṛṣṇa again and again, Nanda Mahārāja, his mind completely attached to the Lord, felt extreme anxiety and fell silent, overcome by the strength of his love.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His mind spontaneously became attracted to Kṛṣṇa. Again and again (*sam*) Nanda remembered the sweetness and how Kṛṣṇa, full of power, protected him. Then the force of *prema* manifested as tears and choked throat and thus he became silent. He could not speak. *Saṁsmṛtya is* repeated to show that he could not stop remembering Kṛṣṇa.

Text 46.28

yaśodā varṇyamānāni putrasya caritāni ca
śṛṇvanty aśrūṇy avāsrākṣīt sneha-snuta-payodharā

As mother Yaśodā heard the descriptions of her son's activities, she poured out her tears, and milk flowed from her breasts out of love.

COMMENTARY: Hearing that her son was a *devatā*, Yaśodā could not stop seeing Kṛṣṇa as her son. Rather her affection increased. This shows her intense *vātsalya.* The present tense is used to indicate that just when the description of Kṛṣṇa began, at that moment she heard. The word *ca* indicates descriptions of his form and qualities as well. Her breasts began to flow with milk. This shows her intense affection. This continued for a long time. Tears flowed out everywhere (*ava*), dampening her cloth. She could not question, speak, or do anything. Thus she was different from Nanda.

Text 46.29

tayor itthaṁ bhagavati kṛṣṇe nanda-yaśodayoḥ
vīkṣyānurāgaṁ paramaṁ nandam āhoddhavo mudā

Uddhava then joyfully addressed Nanda Mahārāja, having clearly seen the supreme loving attraction he and Yaśodā felt for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: Seeing such deep prema (*anurāgam*)—*prema* which he had not seen before—of the rulers of Vraja for Kṛṣṇa, full of all sweetness, his own Lord, whose toenails are worshipped by Brahmā and Śiva (*bhagavati*), he spoke to Nanda in astonishment since Nanda was the main person, or Yaśodā was incapable of hearing, because of her disturbance from affection.

Or *tayoḥ* means they had indescribable greatness or had the highest *prema* through a boon from Brahmā when they were Droṇa and Dharā. Nanda was he who gave joy to the universe by his great *bhakti*, or to Kṛṣṇa by his great affection. Yaśodā spread fame by controlling Kṛṣṇa by her affection, tying him with a rope. He was astonished by their high qualification.

Ittham anurāgam can also mean "such *prema*." He saw the excellent, highest affection increasing again and again, with a choked voice and flowing tears described in the previous verses. Experiencing this directly, Uddhava spoke with affection (*mudā*) since he was the best of devotees. He naturally becomes joyful on seeing the intense *prema* of the greatest devotees. Or though he should have cried, he showed joy because he was endowed with qualities of the greatest advisor (*uddhavaḥ*). He could not otherwise pacify them.

Text 46.30

śrī-uddhava uvāca
yuvāṁ ślāghyatamau nūnaṁ dehinām iha māna-da
nārāyaṇe 'khila-gurau yat kṛtā matir īdṛśī

Śrī Uddhava said: O respectable Nanda! Certainly you and mother Yaśodā are the most praiseworthy persons in the entire world, since you have developed such a loving attitude toward the shelter of Mahā-viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, who is greater than the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha.

COMMENTARY: Uddhava speaks for fourteen verses (30-43). Some explain as follows. Uddhava stopped up the *prema* of Nanda and Yaśodā by speaking of the powers of the Lord, defining him in terms of neutrality to the world and seeing him as the soul of all beings. This had two goals. He could reduce their suffering by stopping their *prema*, since their suffering arose from their *prema*. This would fulfill one of Kṛṣṇa's orders. That is the first goal. If Kṛṣṇa came to Vraja attracted by their *prema*, Kṛṣṇa could not fulfil his duties to the Yadus, also great devotees. That is the second goal.

But was impossible to stop their deep *prema*. Great devotees like Uddhava knew this by their experience. Moreover, stopping *prema* in the devotees will not destroy their suffering, but rather increase their suffering, since

prema with its transformations is the form of the highest bliss. The devotee's joy in *prema* shines in the Lord. The people of Vraja pray:

karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇānāṁ yatra kvāpīśvarecchayā
maṅgalācaritair dānai ratir naḥ kṛṣṇa īśvare

Wherever we are made to wander about this world by the Supreme Lord's will, in accordance with the reactions to our fruitive work, may our good works and charity always grant us love for Kṛṣṇa. SB 10.47.67

Secondly, if the Lord comes to Vraja sometimes to please his parents, it does not destroy his relationship with the Yadus since he is still with them. Moreover, this explanation is not according to the manifested pastimes (in which Kṛṣṇa did return). Because of their experience of affection in seeing Kṛṣṇa as their son, they always saw Kṛṣṇa as their son rather than the Lord. Yaśodā saw him as her son rather than the universal form. Since that perception was the highest, the explanation (in which Yaśodā sees him as the Lord), is false.

This is the meaning. Astonished by the intense *prema* of the couple, Uddhava first praised them with four verses (30-33). In verse 34, he says that Kṛṣṇa will return. In this way he comforts the couple completely. Not only did he comfort them, but Kṛṣṇa did return as stated by the people of Dvārakā:

yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān
kurūn madhūn vātha suhṛd-didṛkṣayā
tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved
raviṁ vinākṣṇor iva nas tavācyuta

O lotus-eyed Lord! When you go to Hastināpura or Vraja to see your friends, one moment becomes like a trillion years for us, who belong to you, and who become like eyes without the sun. SB 1.11.9

There were no other friends in Mathurā area at that time except the people of Vraja.

First Uddhava praises the couple. In this world, among men, *devatās* and sages, you two certainly (*nūnam*) are most worth of praise. Devotees are to be praised. *Prema-bhaktas* are praised more. The devotee with special affection is praised the most. You two are most worthy of praise

(*ślāghyatamau*). O most worthy of respect (*māna-da*)! I give respect to you two, since you are dedicated to the lord of all *jīvas* (*nārāyaṇe*), the guru of all including Brahmā, thinking of him as your son. Though Uddhava describes the Lord's greatness, he is ultimately glorifying Nanda and Yaśodā.

Text 46.31

etau hi viśvasya ca bīja-yonī rāmo mukundaḥ puruṣaḥ pradhānam
anvīya bhūteṣu vilakṣaṇasya jñānasya ceśāta imau purāṇau

These two Lords, Mukunda and Balarāma, are each the cause of the universe—the *nimitta* and *upādāna* cause[1]. The independent, eternal Lords enter the hearts of living beings and control their awareness of Brahman.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa alone are the cause of the universe. They enter all beings. The word *ca* should be placed after *mukundaḥ.* They control the *jīva's svarūpa* consisting of pure consciousness alone (*vilakṣaṇasya jñānasya*). The word *ca* means "of the *jīvas*." The *sandhi* is poetic license. Use of *etau* and *imau* emphasize their unique position. Or they enter all *jīvas* as *antaryāmī.* They exist as masters of Brahman, the *svarūpa* of *jñāna*, which is extraordinary (*vilakṣaṇasya*), because they are young, though ancient (*purāṇau*). The two are concentrated Brahman, more astonishing than Brahman.

Texts 46.32

yasmin janaḥ prāṇa-viyoga-kāle
kṣanaṁ samāveśya mano viśuddham
nirhṛtya karmāśayam āśu yāti
parāṁ gatiṁ brahma-mayo 'rka-varṇaḥ

Anyone, even a person in an impure state, who absorbs his mind in Kṛṣṇa for just a moment at the time of death, burns up all traces of sinful reactions and immediately attains the spiritual world with a spiritual body, which is self-illuminating.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Not seeing signs of satisfaction in Nanda and Yaśodā by his description, Uddhava again described the two boys, with *kaimutya*, in two verses (32-33). The singular is used since Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are non-different (*yasmin*). Any *jīva* who absorbs his pure mind—without relation to the senses—for even a moment in Kṛṣṇa at the time of death immediately attains the supreme goal. Or if he somehow or other absorbs his mind, even impure (*mano aviśuddham*), in Kṛṣṇa, he immediately attains the supreme goal—which manifests from the Lord's *svarūpa* (*brahma-mayaḥ*), a form of *śuddha-sattva*, a function of the *cit-śakti*. He attains a spiritual body as an associate of the Lord. He does not attain something which disappears like objects made of matter. He becomes effulgent like the sun—self-illuminating, and with the ability to illuminate others. Similarly, the Lord is described in the same way. *Ādityavarṇām tamasaḥ parastāt*: he is beyond *prakṛti,* self-effulgent. (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*)

Texts 46.33

tasmin bhavantāv akhilātma-hetau
nārāyaṇe kāraṇa-martya-mūrtau
bhāvaṁ vidhattāṁ nitarāṁ mahātman
kiṁ vāvaśiṣṭaṁ yuvayoḥ su-kṛtyam

O greatly intelligent Nanda! You two have shown the highest *anurāga* to Kṛṣṇa, the revealer of all forms of the Lord and *jīvas*, the shelter of Mahā-viṣṇu, who appears in human form. What remains for you to do?

COMMENTARY: He uses the word *bhavantau* (you two) to show great respect to Nanda and Yaśodā at the beginning of the statement. At the end of the statement he uses *yuvayoḥ* to indicate his great devotion to them. This is understood later also. Kṛṣṇa is the cause of everything and the *ātmā* of everything (*akhilātma-hetau*). This shows his difference (cause) and non-difference (*ātma*) from everything. This is the *vaiṣṇava-siddhānta*. Or he is the cause of all the *jīvas* (*ātma*). They manifest from him. He is Brahman. "The supreme is without form." He is Nārāyaṇa. "Nārāyaṇa has four arms." He has a human form (*martya-mūrtau*) which is affectionate to devotees (*kāraṇa*) or endowed with a variety of astonishing pastimes.

You two show affection (*bhāvam*) for him which surpasses that of any of the parents of the *avatāras* including Vasudeva and Devakī. O greatly

intelligent Nanda! *Vā* indicates a doubt. What else have you two to do? Only he should satisfy you completely. That is all that remains to be done. That is the meaning of *su.*

Text 46.34

āgamiṣyaty adīrgheṇa kālena vrajam acyutaḥ
priyaṁ vidhāsyate pitror bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

Infallible Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the devotees, will soon return to Vraja to satisfy his parents.

COMMENTARY: Seeing that Nanda did not become peaceful but was full of pain because of affection arising from hearing the excellence of Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava pacifies him by confirming that Kṛṣṇa will return.

Kṛṣṇa does not fail to keep his word (*acyutaḥ*). And in coming, he will not be indifferent but will stay. He will stay for a long time and make you two happy. He will do this because you are his parents (*pitroḥ*). He is most merciful (*bhagavān*) and moreover the protector of the devotees (*sātvatām patiḥ*).

Or "Why will he not come now?" He must please his parents Vasudeva and Devakī. He must protect the Yadus (*sātvatām patiḥ*) since he has appeared to help the devotees (*bhagavān*). He must finish up some remaining work.

Text 46.35

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām
yad āha vaḥ samāgatya kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill his promise to you by coming back.

COMMENTARY: "We cannot believe he will return." Making them remember that Kṛṣṇa's words are truthful and infallible, he explains further. Showing his prowess to give joy to his devotees by killing Kaṁsa, he will make true what he said. There is never anything untrue in his words.

Text 46.36

mā khidyataṁ mahā-bhāgau drakṣyathaḥ kṛṣṇam antike
antar hṛdi sa bhūtānām āste jyotir ivaidhasi

O most fortunate ones, do not lament. You will see Kṛṣṇa again very soon. He is present within you just as Paramātmā is in the hearts of all living beings, or as fire lies dormant in wood.

COMMENTARY: He is in the hearts of all beings. You will see him on your lap (*antike*). Therefore, do not lament. O fortunate couple! By the great fortune of your *bhakti*, he will be attracted and will come. You will see Kṛṣṇa who is attracted by *bhakti*. In order to remove Yaśoda's suffering by saying that she will soon see her son, he calls out to grief-striken Yaśoda as well as Nanda.

Text 46.37

na hy asyāsti priyaḥ kaścin nāpriyo vāsty amāninaḥ
nottamo nādhamo vāpi samānasyāsamo 'pi vā

For him no one is especially dear or despicable, superior or inferior, and yet he is not indifferent to anyone since he is free from false identity and equal in all circumstances.

COMMENTARY: "Why will he return, when he has many women in the city?" Among the *jīvas* some end their karma by various material means and, assuming the status of lovers, attain the fourteen levels of *bhāva*.[2] But such *bhāvas* mean nothing to him. That is explained in three verses (37-39). For Kṛṣṇa, no one is especially dear by doing him favors. Not at all. No one is disfavored by him if they do offenses. Not at all. That is because he is *amāninaḥ,* without conceptions of friend or enemy. He does not notice a person because he is high nor ignores a person because he is low. He is not even not neutral (*asamaḥ*).

Text 46.38

na mātā na pitā tasya na bhāryā na sutādayaḥ
nātmīyo na paraś cāpi na deho janma eva ca

He has no mother, no father, no wife, children or other relatives. No one is related to him, and yet no one is a stranger to him. He has no material body and no birth.

COMMENTARY: No one is a friend (*ātmīyaḥ*) or enemy (*paraḥ*) because he is equal to all. He has no physical relationships such as mother and father or

wife and sons whom he should protect. In his *avatāra* form of Varāha, his son was Naraka. Kṛṣṇa killed Naraka. *Adayaḥ* means brothers and other male relatives. He has no material birth or material body, or material action (next verse).

Text 46.39

na cāsya karma vā loke sad-asan-miśra-yoniṣu
krīḍārthaṁ so 'pi sādhūnāṁ paritrāṇāya kalpate

He has no karma. Yet to enjoy his pastimes and deliver his saintly devotees, he manifests himself in different species.

COMMENTARY: The word *ca* indicates that the Lord has no material conditions like the *jīva*. The word *na* should be supplied for all the items in the previous list. *Vā* indicates all the items: whatever is possible but not mentioned is also included with denial. Though this is so, for the devotees, the Lord accepts them as dear to himself and for persons who harass the devotees, he has no affection. With the goal of performing pastimes with his devotees, to protect his devotees from the demons, he will appear in the womb of *devatās* and others and kill the demons. The meaning is that the Lord is partial to the devotees. Because you two are greater devotees than Vasudeva and Devakī, disregarding them, he will come to Vraja for you in order to perform his attractive pastimes, pulled by your ropes of *prema*.

Text 46.40

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti bhajate nirguṇo guṇān
krīḍann atīto 'pi guṇaiḥ sṛjaty avan hanty ajaḥ

Although beyond the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—the Lord accepts association with them as his play. Thus the unborn Supreme Lord utilizes the material modes to create, maintain and destroy.

COMMENTARY: "Though he has no material activities, why is it said that he creates the universe (verse 3)?" Two verses (40-41) explain. He acts in the world as play. That play is produced by manifesting spiritual qualities. Though the Lord is untouched by the material *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and

tamas, and though he is without birth, he manifests qualities beyond the *guṇas* such as cleverness and mercy to play in this world using those qualities. He creates melodies which bewilder Brahmā and Śiva. He protects the *gopīs* from Śaṅkhacūḍa and other demons. He destroys Śaṅkhacūḍa and others. Or he creates calves and cowherd boys, he maintains those forms for a year, and withdraws those forms after that.

Text 46.41

yathā bhramarikā-dṛṣṭyā bhrāmyatīva mahīyate
citte kartari tatrātmā kartevāhaṁ-dhiyā smṛtaḥ

Just as a person who is whirling around perceives the ground to be turning, one who is affected by false ego thinks himself the doer, when actually only his mind is acting.

COMMENTARY: Why does it appear to common people that the Lord is absorbed in the *guṇas*? It is a perception based on their point of view.

Text 46.42

yuvayor eva naivāyam ātmajo bhagavān hariḥ
sarveṣām ātmajo hy ātmā pitā mātā sa īśvaraḥ

The Supreme Lord is certainly not your son alone. Rather, since he is the *ātmā* of all beings and the Lord, he is the son, father and mother.

COMMENTARY: Though Uddhava explained everything, he saw that Nanda was not believing because of his strong *prema*. He again speaks the same meaning. This person, the Lord (*ayam īśvaraḥ*), endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*), all attractive (*hariḥ*), is your son. He concludes this by seeing Nanda's behavior as a father. He is not the son of Rohiṇī, Devakī or Vasudeva in that manner. Moreover, he is not just your son: he is dearest (*ātmā*), your protector (*pītā*) and most affectionate, like a mother. Or since he knows the essence of *prema*, he is not your son in the same way that he relates to all others. Do not lose faith in his coming.

Text 46.43

dṛṣṭaṁ śrutaṁ bhūta-bhavad-bhaviṣyat
sthāsnuś cariṣṇur mahad alpakaṁ ca

vināćyutād vastu tarāṁ na vācyaṁ
sa eva sarvaṁ paramātma-bhūtaḥ

Nothing can be said to exist independent of Acyuta—nothing heard or seen, nothing in the past, present or future, nothing moving or unmoving, great or small. He alone is everything, for he is the basis of everything.

COMMENTARY: One should not think that he will be delayed in coming because he is far away. Visible or invisible objects, moving and non-moving living beings, are all dependent on him. He never deviates at all (*acyuta*) because he is everything (*sarvam*). As the *antaryāmī* of all *jīvas*, he alone exists (*paramātmā-bhūtaḥ*). Another version has *paramārtha-bhūtaḥ*, with the same meaning. Appearing here, since he pervades everywhere, he will quickly show himself.

Text 46.44

evaṁ niśā sā bruvator vyatītā
nandasya kṛṣṇānucarasya rājan
gopyaḥ samutthāya nirūpya dīpān
vāstūn samabhyarcya daudhīny amanthun

While Kṛṣṇa's messenger continued speaking with Nanda, the night ended, O King. The women of the cowherd village rose from bed and, lighting lamps, worshiped their household deities. Then they began churning the yogurt into butter.

COMMENTARY: The two continued to speak, so that the words were understood by Nanda (*evam*). Nanda said, "Does he remember us?" Or like this the two spoke on other topics as well (*evam*). The night (*sā niśā*), though long or related to their conversation, passed completely (*vi atītāḥ*). Nanda's lamentation did not cease and Uddhava's attempts did not cease, though Uddhava was most skillful (*kṛṣṇānucarasya*). It is understood that Uddhava quickly went outside to perform morning duties. O king! You can understand this since you have great intelligence.

Not knowing of Uddhava's arrival, the *gopīs* began morning duties. As cowherd women, they churned the yogurt. *Gopyaḥ* also means "those who protected their bodies carefully because of their hope." Rising up after

being absorbed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa's attractive pastimes (not sleeping), they performed worship (*arcya*) according to the rules (*sam*), completely (*abh*i). Though generally detached from duties because of the pain of separation, doing them out of practice, they performed their duties with special attention to please Kṛṣṇa, because of the instruction that he would return. Or they churned the yogurt as a pretext for singing about him. Or they churned to send butter to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 46.45

tā dīpa-dīptair maṇibhir virejū
rajjūr vikarṣad-bhuja-kaṅkaṇa-srajaḥ
calan-nitamba-stana-hāra-kuṇḍala-
tviṣat-kapolāruṇa-kuṅkumānanāḥ

As they pulled on the churning ropes with their bangled arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jewels, which reflected the lamps' light. Their hips, breasts and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish kuṅkuma, glowed radiantly with the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks.

COMMENTARY: They shone because of the light from lamps. Or they shone with light more than lamps. They shone by their nature. They also became more beautiful by their jewels. There was another reason for their shining. They made noise when they moved their arms with bracelets to pull the ropes. This also caused their hips, breasts, and necklaces to move. Their cheeks were lit by their earrings. Or their hips, breasts, necklaces and earrings moved. Or their cheeks shone from drops of perspiration from pulling the ropes. Their faces anointed with *kuṅkuma* became red from the effort of churning. The gems were naturally there on their limbs. Or they wore ornaments sent by Kṛṣṇa to please him.

Text 46.46

udgāyatīnām aravinda-locanaṁ
vrajāṅganānāṁ divam aspṛśad dhvaniḥ
dadhnaś ca nirmanthana-śabda-miśrito
nirasyate yena diśām amaṅgalam

As the ladies of Vraja loudly sang the glories of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, their songs blended with the sound of their churning, ascended to the sky and dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though they churned the yogurt for maintaining proper behavior as members of Vraja, controlled by impressions in their minds maintained by Kṛṣṇa himself, they were actually absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. When there was a suitable opportunity they engaged in singing, which produced auspiciousness throughout the universe. They sang loudly (*udgāyatīnām*), revealing their absorption. They sang songs mainly about his beauty, including his lotus eyes. They sang skillfully since they were well known women of Vraja (*vrajāṅganānām*). Because they sang loudly due to their *prema,* and many sang, the sound spread everywhere, touching even the sky. Another reason was that the sound of singing was mixed with the sound of continuous churning. The word *ca* indicates that there was also the sound of their bangles. This sound dissipated inauspiciousness of all people in the ten directions. It dissipated (*nirasyate*) unlimited suffering of this life and the next and the root, karma, along with all *vāsanas.*

Text 46.47

bhagavaty udite sūrye nanda-dvāri vrajaukasaḥ
dṛṣṭvā rathaṁ śātakaumbhaṁ kasyāyam iti cābruvan

When the powerful sun had risen, the people of Vraja noticed the golden chariot in front of Nanda Mahārāja's doorway. "Who does this belong to?" they asked.

COMMENTARY: The sun is called *bhagavati* because it has the power to destroy darkness or because the sun is the residence of the Lord who is worshipped there. Since the people always stayed in Vraja (*vrajaukasaḥ*), they were unfamiliar with the chariot. It was astonishing, made of gold. They spoke and also cried, remembering Akrūra's chariot. Here the *gopīs* are meant, since later it is said that the women spoke. Or all the people spoke. Then hearing those words, the women spoke.

Text 46.48

akrūra āgataḥ kiṁ vā yaḥ kaṁsasyārtha-sādhakaḥ
yena nīto madhu-purīṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kamala-locanaḥ

"Perhaps Akrūra has returned—he who fulfilled Kaṁsa's desire by taking lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.

COMMENTARY: Mathurā was the city of the demon Madhu. It was unsuitable that Kṛṣṇa was taken to such a city. Kṛṣṇa is the form of pure bliss and the lord of our hearts. He can destroy all pain by his glance alone (*kamala-locanaḥ*). Therefore it is improper to take such a person from Vraja to that demon's city.

Text 46.49

kiṁ sādhayiṣyaty asmābhir bhartuḥ prītasya niṣkṛtim
tataḥ strīṇāṁ vadantīnām uddhavo 'gāt kṛtāhnikaḥ

"Is he going to use our flesh to offer funeral oblations for his master, who was so satisfied with his service?" As the women were speaking in this way, Uddhava appeared, having finished his early-morning duties.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the chariot, thinking Akrūra had come, filled with great pain, they revealed their minds among themselves with this verse. *Niṣkṛtim* means debts to the departed person. They spoke out of confusion, not considering the purpose of his journey. Uddhava appeared in the middle of Vraja (*āgāt*).

---

[1] *Nimitta* means efficient cause and *Upādāna* means material cause, just as in making a pot – clay is the material cause while the potmaker is the efficient casue.

[2] These are *bhāva*, *prema*, *praṇaya* (2), *sneha* (2), *raga* (2), *māna* (2), *anurāga* (2) and *mahābhāva* (2).

Chapter Forty-seven
The Song of the Bee (Bhramara-gītā)

Texts 47.1–2

śrī-śuka uvāca
taṁ vīkṣya kṛṣānucaraṁ vraja-striyaḥ
pralamba-bāhuṁ nava-kañja-locanam
pītāmbaraṁ puṣkara-mālinaṁ lasan-
mukhāravindaṁ parimṛṣṭa-kuṇḍalam
su-vismitāḥ ko 'yam apīvya-darśanaḥ
kutaś ca kasyācyuta-veṣa-bhūṣaṇaḥ
iti sma sarvāḥ parivavrur utsukās
tam uttamaḥ-śloka-padāmbujāśrayam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The young women of Vraja became astonished upon seeing Kṛṣṇa's servant, who had long arms, whose eyes resembled a newly grown lotus, who wore a yellow garment and a lotus garland, and whose lotuslike face glowed with brightly polished earrings. "Who is this handsome man?" the *gopīs* asked. "Where has he come from, and whom does he serve? He's wearing Kṛṣṇa's clothes and ornaments!" Saying this, the *gopīs* eagerly crowded around Uddhava, whose shelter was the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: By his great *bhakti*, Uddhava, attaining a similar form as the Lord, followed him (*kṛṣṇānucaram*).

The women of Vraja (*vraja-śtriyaḥ*) were always meditating on Kṛṣṇa's form and clothing. Seeing Uddhava directly from far off, they were most surprised because his form was similar to Kṛṣṇa's, with long arms and lotus eyes. The first two lines describe his beauty and the other lines his ornaments and his beauty, shining a smiling face, or because of his earrings.

Who is this person with beautiful form (*darśanaḥ*)? Though not mentioned, it is understood that his form, age and complexion were similar to Kṛṣṇa's. He had a similar necklace and other ornaments (*acyuta-veśa-*

bhuṣaṇaḥ). He had the dress of a dancer. Or he actually wore Kṛṣṇa's cloth and ornaments.

tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-vāso-'laṅkāra-carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa-bhojino dāsās tava māyāṁ jayema hi

Simply by decorating ourselves with the garlands, fragrant oils, clothes and ornaments that you have already enjoyed, and by eating the remnants of your meals, we, your servants, will indeed conquer your illusory energy. SB 11.6.46

The *gopīs* became excited or full of longing (*utsukāḥ*). They individually came from different places. Or gathering in a group out of great pain, they came there together. They surrounded him since he had taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. This indicates that because of his devotion, he was similar in qualities. Or he was the shelter or pillow for Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, in order to massage them. He was thus always close to Kṛṣṇa and most dear to him. The word *tam* should not be repeated, but appears twice because of Śukadeva's disturbed speech.

Text 47.3

taṁ praśrayeṇāvanatāḥ su-sat-kṛtaṁ
sa-vrīḍa-hāsekṣaṇa-sūnṛtādibhiḥ
rahasy apṛcchann upaviṣṭam āsane
vijñāya sandeśa-haraṁ ramā-pateḥ

Bowing their heads in humility, the *gopīs* duly honored Uddhava with their shy, smiling glances and pleasing words. They took him to a quiet place, seated him comfortably and began to question him, for they recognized him to be a messenger from Kṛṣṇa, the master of the goddess of fortune.

COMMENTARY: After surrounding Uddhava, the *gopīs* remained with heads bowed in humility. Politely (*su-sat-kṛtam*) they asked him, Kṛṣṇa's messenger, when he was seated, in private, with shy glances, slight smiles and friendly words. They understood he was a messenger because of symptoms. Their love for the Lord arose naturally on seeing similarity to the Lord's form. The friendly words were words of welcome. They also offered foot water and other items. Or they asked Uddhava who had been

nicely worshipped (*su-sat-kṛtam*). This means that, seeing their love for Kṛṣṇa, he became happy.

Kṛṣṇa is called the husband of Lakṣmī, because they thought that Kṛṣṇa could also protect them. Or they understood that he was a messenger sent secretly (*rahasi*) and thus questioned him.

Text 47.4

jānīmas tvāṁ yadu-pateḥ pārṣadaṁ samupāgatam
bhartreha preṣitaḥ pitror bhavān priya-cikīrṣayā

[The *gopīs* said:] We know that you are the personal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, and that you have come here on the order of your master, who desires to give pleasure to his parents.

COMMENTARY: We know that you have come to Nanda (*āgatam*), riding the king's chariot (*sam*). We do not need to ask about this. Since he is king of the Yadus, it is suitable that he ignores us. They explain. Giving up Kṛṣṇa, you have come here on the order of your master. The servant must carry out the master's order. "Since he sent me, understand that he is most concerned about you." Kṛṣṇa desires to comfort his parents.

Text 47.5

anyathā go-vraje tasya smaraṇīyaṁ na cakṣmahe
snehānubandho bandhūnāṁ muner api su-dustyajaḥ

We see nothing else he might consider worth remembering in these cow pastures of Vraja. But the bonds of affection for one's family members are difficult to break, even for a sage.

COMMENTARY: Other than family members (*anyathā),* we do not see any person for him to remember in Vraja with its cows. Out of misery they compare themselves to cows. One has affection for family members. Even *ātmārāmas* find it difficult to give up those attachments, what to speak of a person like him, with so much wealth.

Text 47.6

anyeṣv artha-kṛtā maitrī yāvad-artha-viḍambanam
pumbhiḥ strīṣu kṛtā yadvat sumanaḥsv iva ṣaṭpadaiḥ

The friendship shown toward others—those who are not family members—is motivated by personal interest, and thus it is a pretense that lasts only until one's purpose is fulfilled. Such friendship is just like the interest men take in women, or bees in flowers.

COMMENTARY: Affection for persons other than family members is motivated. Or though it is difficult even for *ātmārāmas* to give up family members, we do not see anyone attractive to him in Vraja since he has no friends here. "One sees affection for persons who are not family members?" That is very temporary. His friendship with others is motivated. It does not continue after his goal is achieved. It is a show only. Sometimes one sees a strong friendship between some man and some woman. Thus, another example is given. He is like a bee in flowers (*sumanaḥsu*). *Sumanaḥsu* also means "in persons with good hearts." They have no fault but the bee is fickle.

Text 47.7

niḥsvaṁ tyajanti gaṇikā akalpaṁ nṛpatiṁ prajāḥ
adhīta-vidyā ācāryam ṛtvijo datta-dakṣiṇam

Prostitutes abandon a penniless man, subjects an incompetent king, students their teacher once they have finished their education, and priests a man who has remunerated them for a sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: *Niḥsvam* is a person who had money, but spends it. Citizens give up a king who cannot give protection (*akalpam*). Priests give up the sponsor once he has given the donation.

Text 47.8

khagā vīta-phalaṁ vṛkṣaṁ bhuktvā cātithayo gṛham
dagdhaṁ mṛgās tathāraṇyaṁ jārā bhuktvā ratāṁ striyam

Birds abandon a tree when its fruits are gone, guests a house after they have eaten, animals a forest that has burnt down, and lovers the woman they have enjoyed, even though she remains attached to them.

COMMENTARY: Birds, wandering in the sky and seeing fruit, come there. Guests by invitation or because of hunger come to a house to eat. Animals come to a forest for fresh grass but give it up when it is burned down. Men

give up women they have enjoyed. Speaking generally, they do not actually indicate their own condition, though they speak out of misery. Since they are dedicated to Kṛṣṇa with the highest *prema*, they cannot have a relationship like a material man and woman. The eight examples are related to material goals.

Texts 47.9–10

iti gopyo hi govinde gata-vāk-kāya-mānasāḥ
kṛṣṇa-dūte samāyāte uddhave tyakta-laukikāḥ
gāyantyaḥ prīya-karmāṇi rudantyaś ca gata-hriyaḥ
tasya saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya yāni kaiśora-bālyayoḥ

Thus speaking, the gopīs, whose words, bodies and minds were fully dedicated to Govinda, put aside all their regular work now that Kṛṣṇa's messenger, Uddhava, had arrived among them. Constantly remembering the activities their beloved Kṛṣṇa had performed in his childhood and youth, they sang about them and cried without shame.

COMMENTARY: Saying this (*iti*), the *gopīs* stopped their duties. Or they gave up their duties in this way. They had previously given their bodies, minds and words to the king of Gokula (*govinde*), who pervades all the senses. They had offered their limbs or life airs to him. Or they forgot their bodies, being absorbed in him. Or they gave up their bodily activities for him. Or they did activities only for him. They did this because the messenger of Kṛṣṇa, who attracted their hearts (*kṛṣṇa*), had arrived in Vraja. They gave up shame. Or then they wept and fainted.

Text 47.11

kācin madhukaraṁ dṛṣṭvā dhyāyantī kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam
priya-prasthāpitaṁ dūtaṁ kalpayitvedam abravīt

One of the gopīs, while meditating on her previous association with Kṛṣṇa, saw a honeybee before her and imagined it to be a messenger sent by her beloved. Thus she spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: The chief gopī among them (*kācit*) then spoke. Or *kācit* means she who has knowledge (*cit*) complete with the happiness of prema (*ke ā*). This means Rādhā.

gopyaḥ papracchur uṣasi kṛṣṇānucaram uddhavam
hari-līlā-vihārāṁś ca tatraikāṁ rādhikāṁ vinā
rādhā tad-bhāva-saṁlīnā vāsanāyā virāmitā
sakhībhiḥ sābhyādhāc chuddha-vijñāna-guṇa-jṛmbitam
ījyānte-vāsināṁ veda-caramāṁśa-vibhāvanaiḥ

In the morning the *gopīs* asked Uddhava, the servant of Kṛṣṇa, about his pastimes, without Rādhā asking. Absorbed in her love for him, giving up all other thoughts, Rādhā spoke *citra-jalpa* with her *sakhīs,* using examples from the *Upaniṣads* which are worshipped by the sections on *karma*, and reveal pure knowledge. *Agni Purāṇa*

Gopīs other than Rādhā asked Uddhava about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā was absorbed in *mahābhāva* for Kṛṣṇa and had thus given up all other desires. She spoke to Uddhava, a disciple of Bṛhaspati, using examples from the *Upaniṣads*. Uddhava was full of realization in *prema*. Thus Rādhā's *citra-jalpa* was a transformation of *divyonmāda*, and the essence of the Upaniṣads.

etasya mohanākhyasya gatiṁ kāmapy upeyuṣaḥ
bhramābhā kāpi vaicitrī divyonmāda itīryate
udghūrṇā-citra-jalpādyās tad-bhedā bahavo matāḥ

When *mohana* attains an indescribable state similar to complete bewilderment with remarkable symptoms, it is called *divyonmāda.* It has many forms such as *udghūrṇā* and *citra-jalpa. Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.190-191

preṣṭhasya suhṛdāloke gūḍha-roṣābhijṛmbhitaḥ
bhūri-bhāva-mayo jalpo yas tīvrotkaṇṭhitāntimaḥ

The excessive chatter that arises out of great, deep anger, in the presence of a friend of the lover, filled with various *bhāvas* and finally ending with intense longing, is called *citra-jalpa. Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* 14.195

Except for the last verse, everything is pervaded by anger. A bee suddenly appeared. She thought it was a messenger sent by Kṛṣṇa. By meditating on associating with Kṛṣṇa, by seeing Uddhava or by her very nature, she thought the bee was sent by him. She spoke to Uddhava, but aimed at the bee. Or seeing the messenger Uddhava sent by Kṛṣṇa, she imagined him to be a bee since she meditated on associating with Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava appeared like a bee because of his dark complexion. She did not look closely since

she was overcome by *mahābhāva* mixed with pain in separation, by absorbing her mind in associating with Kṛṣṇa.

Without the Lord's mercy no one can understand the words of Rādhā, whose mind was absorbed in Govinda and who talked because of her natural *prema*.

Text 47.12

gopy uvāca
madhupa kitava-bandho mā spṛśaṅghriṁ sapatnyāḥ
kuca-vilulita-mālā-kuṅkuma-śmaśrubhir naḥ
vahatu madhu-patis tan-māninīnāṁ prasādaṁ
yadu-sadasi viḍambyaṁ yasya dūtas tvam īdṛk

The gopī said: O honeybee, O friend of a cheater, don't touch my feet with your whiskers, which are smeared with the kuṅkuma that rubbed onto Kṛṣṇa's garland when it was crushed by the breasts of a rival lover! Let Kṛṣṇa satisfy the women of Mathurā. One who sends a messenger like you will certainly be ridiculed in the Yadus' assembly.

COMMENTARY: *Madhupati* (chief of the Madhu dynasty) also means one who drinks liquor. Such a person cheats others. O cheater (*madhupati*)! O friend of a cheater (*kitava-bandho*)! Krṣṇa said he could never repay us, but then he left us. The bee is called a friend of Kṛṣṇa because he acts as his messenger or because he is also black. Or you are called *madhupa* and he is *madhupati,* with similar names. Intoxicated persons and cheaters become friends. You two have similar actions.

The *jalpa* of Rādhā which produces intense sweetness by waves of deep hatred, pride, disrespect, and joking from the abundant sweetness of *mahābhāva,* which ignored all rules when she saw the messenger of Kṛṣṇa, can be understood by some persons.

She calls him a cheater out of hatred. She thinks the bee is going to touch her feet to pacify her when it flies towards her toenails, thinking they are *raṅgana* flowers. "Do not touch my feet." We are proud and independent. We cannot be pacified by such things. What can touching my feet do? This shows pride. She thinks that Uddhava also is doing the same thing to pacify her, because of her absorption in meeting Kṛṣṇa.

The statements are not always grammatically correct because of her state of *unmāda* in *mahābhāva*. But this becomes a good quality and somehow becomes suitable and pleases the devotees.

The rival is Lakṣmī or some other woman of Mathurā. Or it expresses the women of Mathurā in general. She imagines that the bee's whiskers are tinged with *kuṅkuma* from Kṛṣṇa's garland, but the *kuṅkuma* came from his tightly embracing (*vilulit*a) the woman's breasts. She speaks in the plural (*naḥ*) to indicate her friends well, or to show respect. The same is true of other verses also. Some say that Uddhava's hairs were also reddish but that is not correct, since verse 2 describes him as being very handsome. However, one can say that she imposes that form on Uddhava who has unlimited qualities and form, by imagining that Uddhava is a bee.

We are astonished by his love affairs with our rival. This expresses her envy or hatred. *Māninīnām* refers to the city women or women he has enjoyed. The plural is used to indicate that after pleasing one woman he goes to another. Let him do that. Let him go to them and touch their feet. What do we have to do with him? This shows disrespect. He is the lord of the Yadus (*madhupatiḥ*). That is to be expected from someone having power. He is also a master of intoxication (*madhupatiḥ*), having no sense of friendship. Let him do this since (*yad*), O bee (*u*), his action will be laughed at in the assembly of friends (*sadasi*). By the *kuṅkuma* on the bee's whiskers, Kṛṣṇa's lack of shame in dealing with women is indicated, since the quality of the master is transferred to the servant.

Or though sent to pacify us, you have come with our rival's *kuṅkuma* on your whiskers. This shows your lack of intelligence. The master is controlled by women and the servant follows. This imitation (*viḍambyam)* will be mocked.

Or do not touch me with whiskers full of *kuṅkuma* because you are a friend of the cheater. He is a cheater because he has other women. He cheats not only us, but all women. Let him please them. You are similar to him. You are the intoxicated messenger and he is the master of intoxication. What is this pleasure he gives? It is all cheating. By touching feet, he is merely cheating.

Text 47.13

sakṛd adhara-sudhāṁ svāṁ mohinīṁ pāyayitvā
sumanasa iva sadyas tatyaje 'smān bhavādṛk
paricarati kathaṁ tat-pāda-padmaṁ nu padmā
hy api bata hṛta-cetā hy uttamaḥ-śloka-jalpaiḥ

After making us drink the enchanting nectar of his lips only once, Kṛṣṇa suddenly abandoned us, just as you might quickly abandon some flowers. How is it, then, that Goddess Padmā willingly serves his lotus feet? Alas! The answer must certainly be that her mind has been stolen away by his deceitful words.

COMMENTARY: *Sudhā* can mean "that which receives the heart of drinkers while intoxicating them." Thus it means the lips cause one to drink the greatest sweetness. In the example of the bee and the flowers, the *gopī* implies that her love for him is pure (just as the flower is not at fault, but the bee gives it up.) He gave us up because he is cruel, a cheater. "Chaste women should be patient." Or "When he went to Mathurā, did you obstruct him?" The nectar of his lips was bewildering. Our intelligence ceased. You are like him. Since he gave us up, you imitate him and give up the flowers. By great friendship with him, you have also become fickle. This quality confirms your friendship with him. Or just as you are fickle, and people give the flower after smelling it once, Kṛṣṇa gave us up quickly. He should not be served because he has unsteady friendship and is ungrateful.

Thinking Lakṣmī constantly serving him, she speculates. Oh (*nu*)! Why does Lakṣmī serve the lotus feet of this fickle drunkard? Lakṣmī with a play lotus in her hand massages his feet. Oh! It must be (*api*) that her heart is bewildered by the deceptive words of Uttama-śloka. (such as his statement "I cannot repay you" in SB 10.32.22) Or her heart is bewildered by words sung with excellence by praisers. Or her heart is bewildered by the false news brought by his servant when he says "He has the topmost qualities." She indicates that her rival is foolish and she and her friends are clever.

Text 47.14

kim iha bahu ṣaḍ-aṅghre gāyasi tvaṁ yadūnām
adhipatim agṛhāṇām agrato naḥ purāṇam
vijaya-sakha-sakhīnāṁ gīyatāṁ tat-prasaṅgaḥ
kṣapita-kuca-rujas te kalpayantīṣṭam iṣṭāḥ

O bee, why do you sing here so much about the Lord of the Yadus, in front of us homeless people? These topics are old news to us. Better you sing about that friend of Arjuna in front of his new girlfriends, the burning desire in whose breasts he has now relieved. Those ladies will surely give you the charity you are begging.

COMMENTARY: O bee! She indicates that by his nature he is skillful at singing. Animals have four feet. You have six feet. You sing without intelligence since you are just an animal and a half (six feet). Why do you sing so much, in front of us? If you have a desire to sing, do it invisibly just once.

Why do you sing constantly, even if we do not hear? This indicates veiled hatred. "I sing to fulfill my desire." But why do you sing in Vraja (*iha*)? Your desire will be fulfilled in Mathurā, not in the forest. "This place is better than the city." You sing about the lord of the Yadus. It is proper that you sing in front of persons whom he protects, not to others. "He is also the master of you women." We are without homes. We do not have knowledge of singing, since we are from the forest. This is sarcasm. "You are all very skillful." We have heard this song many times. It is old. This suggests hatred. Or we are without lovers (*agṛhāṇām*). Why do you sing a song which previously gave happiness (*purāṇam*) but now gives grief, in front of us who have no lover?

"Where should I sing?" You should sing about him in a place where there are girlfriends of your friend Kṛṣṇa, who has the power to defeat the world. By destroying desire in their hearts, he has made them his lovers. They thus fulfill your desires. This shows envy and crookedness. Or your great attachment for Kṛṣṇa (*tat-prasaṅgaḥ*) should be sung to your friends (since Kṛṣṇa's friends are yours also) who are friends of he who has all attractiveness (*vijaya*).

Or you should sing about those whose pain in the heart is destroyed by his embraces and scratching with his nails. This statement mocks him, showing his boldness. They become dear to you (*īṣṭāḥ*). Being respected by your singing, being dear to you, they will certainly fulfill your desires.

Text 47.15

divi bhuvi ca rasāyāṁ kāḥ striyas tad-durāpāḥ
kapaṭa-rucira-hāsa-bhrū-vijṛmbhasya yāḥ syuḥ
caraṇa-raja upāste yasya bhūtir vayaṁ kā
api ca kṛpaṇa-pakṣe hy uttamaḥ-śloka-śabdaḥ

In heaven, on earth or in the subterranean sphere, what women are unavailable to him? He simply arches his eyebrows and smiles with deceptive charm, and they all become his. The supreme goddess herself worships the dust of his feet, so what is our position in comparison? But at least those who are wretched can chant his name, Uttamaḥśloka.

COMMENTARY: What woman in all the three worlds, upper, middle and lower, is unavailable to him? Lakṣmī worships the dust of his feet. She does extremely low service. *Hi* means certainly. Or "Not only you worship him. Wherever there are young women, they fall under his control." In all the three worlds, what low women, are unavailable? Or all women should be unavailable to him. This shows disrespect for him. The reason is that he moves his brow, while smiling attractively, with deception. By his cleverness he cheats women.

"Why do you say that? The best of all beautiful women, Lakṣmī, worships the dust of his feet." If she worships dust of his feet, let her do that. What is that to us? She is just one among many of us. This shows pride and hatred.

For helping the miserable, there is only the name or fame of Uttama-śloka. Because he ignores the miserable, his fame being a cause of song (*uttama-śloka*) is destroyed. One should not sing about him. Or "Since he is known as Uttama-śloka one should not ignore him. He is the best of all people." He is a miser or cruel person (*kṛpaṇa-pakṣe*) since he does not give happiness by showing himself. Since that is so, his name Uttama-śloka is false. Only his servants call him by that name. This is criticism with hatred.

Text 47.16

visṛja śirasi pādaṁ vedmy ahaṁ cātu-kārair
anunaya-viduṣas te 'bhyetya dautyair mukundāt
sva-kṛta iha viṣṛṣṭāpatya-paty-anya-lokā

vyasṛjad akṛta-cetāḥ kiṁ nu sandheyam asmin

Keep your head off my feet! I know what you're doing. You expertly learned diplomacy from Mukunda, and now you come as his messenger with flattering words. But he abandoned those persons who for his sake alone gave up their children, husbands and all other relations. He's simply ungrateful. Why should I make up with him now?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Other women may not know, but I know since I am perceptive. I know that you have learned from Kṛṣṇa the art of conciliation with messages using clever words. He is Mukunda, the liberator, making us all give up our houses, possessions and families. This indicates his deception and cruelty. Since you are his messenger, you are most deceitful as well. Thus you also cannot be trusted. Or, thinking that her foot is a lotus, the bee approaches her foot and softly hums. Seeing the bee, she thinks the bee is saying, "O lady! Do not be angry. Be merciful and just once hear my request." She then speaks this verse with sarcasm. I know the character of you and Mukunda. Therefore give up my feet along with your extraordinary, flattering words. Give up flattering words and my feet. Those flattering words are messages learned from Mukunda, an expert at conciliation. "O lady! Why fight with your lover. Forgive his one offense. Create peace using me." He has rejected those who have given up house, children, husbands, the happiness of this life and the next and others also for his sake. He is ungrateful or he has not given his heart to us (*akṛta-cetāḥ).* He is concerned only with himself.

Or he gave us up for his own purpose (*sva-kṛtaḥ*). Rejecting us, he attracted husbands, children and others and then gave them up also. Ah! Should we make peace with a cheater? Of course. we should not.

Text 47.17

mṛgayur iva kapīndraṁ vivyadhe lubdha-dharmā
striyam akṛta virūpāṁ strī-jitaḥ kāma-yānām

balim api balim attvāveṣṭayad dhvāṅkṣa-vad yas
tad alam asita-sakhyair dustyajas tat-kathārthaḥ

Like a hunter, he cruelly killed the king of the monkeys (or best bull). Because he was conquered by a woman, he disfigured another woman who came to him with lusty desires. And even after consuming the gifts of Bali Mahārāja, he bound him up with ropes as if he were a crow. So let us give up all friendship with this dark-complexioned boy, even if we can't give up talking about him.

COMMENTARY: He shot the best of monkeys, who had no fault. He is called "*strī-jitaḥ*" because Sītā is a competitor as well as Lakṣmī. He is compared to a crow, which eats offerings meant for the *devatā*s and injures people. Or he was cruel and insulting, binding Bali tightly as if Bali were a crow. This also shows his ingratitude. His friends become black like him. Let us give up the friendship with that black person. The plural is used to indicate complete rejection of all types of friendship with him.

Or "Just hear about the qualities of your friend." She begins criticizing him. Like a hunter, he killed the best bull (*kapīndram*—one who shakes the earth).

atha tarhy āgato goṣṭham ariṣṭo vṛṣabhāsuraḥ
mahīm mahā-kakut-kāyaḥ kampayan khura-vikṣatām

The demon Ariṣṭa then came to the cowherd village. Appearing in the form of a bull with a large hump, he made the earth tremble as he tore it apart with his hooves. SB 10.36.1

Using the bull's horn, like a hunter, not following dharma, he killed the huge bull. Being lusty, he desired the deformed woman, Kubjā. He devoured the offerings given by the cowherds and rejected worshipping Indra. "Then why do you speak about him?" He is the goal of speech in Vraja (*kathārthaḥ*). Being absorbed in speaking of his activities in Vraja, we must speak of him. It is not by our will. And we cannot leave Vraja. What can we do?

Or another meaning is as follows. "One should not find fault in others." One should not speak about him since it is forbidden. But it is not possible to give up speaking about his bad qualities because my anger is aroused by his most unjust actions. Discussing his faults is hard to give up.

Text 47.18

yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ-
sakṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ
sapadi gṛha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā
bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti

To hear about the pastimes that Kṛṣṇa regularly performs is nectar for the ears. For those who relish just a single drop of that nectar, even once, their dedication to material duality is ruined. Many such persons have suddenly given up their wretched homes and families and, themselves becoming wretched, traveled here to Vṛndāvana to wander about like birds, begging for their living.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His activities are for his own use, independent play like that of a small child. These should be criticized since they are contrary to activities for people's benefit. As sound, those pastimes are nectar for the ear, but in meaning, they give pain to the mind. They are not profuse but scant (*vipruṭ*) and are eaten only once and tasted only slightly, coming from a far-off place. By this, the relationship between couples is destroyed, or enjoyment of the duality of warmth and coolness is completely destroyed. People become like birds. After hearing the pastimes just once, people give up their poor fathers, mothers and wives and they themselves become poor and withered. Arriving at the place of the pastimes (*iha*) they beg for a living. Instead of *dīnāḥ* sometimes *dhīrāḥ* is seen. They become undisturbed by suffering or are hard-hearted. Instead of *bahava eva* sometimes *bahava iva* is seen but this is not accepted by the commentators. However, Śrīdhara Svāmī has used the word *haṁsa iva* in giving a secondary meaning. Those who are seen were not previously there, since it would be impossible for them to live in separation from him. They are recent. Thus coming to Vraja and acting like beggars is possible for them just as you, the bee, have come as a messenger.

Or, how can I describe his cruelty? Even those people who hear a little of his pastimes become cruel. She then speaks this verse. The meaning is the same. Or, "Why do you forbid me from singing?" She answers with this

verse. Particularly there are many birds here inclined to sing because of absorption in him. They act like beggars for a living. Are you one among them there? Usually they sing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, but do not take pleasure in that. How can your singing his pastimes give us pleasure?

Text 47.19

vayam ṛtam iva jihma-vyāhṛtaṁ śraddadhānāḥ
kulika-rutam ivājñāḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo hariṇyaḥ
dadṛśur asakṛd etat tan-nakha-sparśa-tīvra
smara-ruja upamantrin bhaṇyatām anya-vārtā

Faithfully taking his deceitful words as true, we became just like the black deer's foolish wives, who trust the cruel hunter's song. Thus we repeatedly felt the sharp pain of lust caused by the touch of his nails. O messenger, please talk about something besides Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: By hearing his pastimes, we experience great pain. What can be said? By his false words we have experienced great suffering. Believing his false words to be true, we, unsuitable for the black person, were like wives of the black deer. Previously she said *alam asita-sakhaih*: enough with the friends of the black person!

The bee says, "O lady! Your lover has sent a message: Dearest! Please be merciful. Do not lament. Please come from there and be merciful to me." Because we were ignorant, previously, being his wives, we experienced pains of love from the touch of his nails. We believed the words of your cheating friend to be true. When leaving, through a messenger he said "I will come back." (SB 10.39.35) He sent a message from Mathurā through a cowherd, "I will return to see my relatives." (SB 10.45.23) We experience incomparable pain, maintaining our bodies with the hope of his returning. This is lamentation with self-pity. Speak of other things. Holding her chest with both hands in pain, for a moment being bewildered, she falls on the ground. That is indicated by the word *etat.* The bee also left.

Text 47.20

priya-sakha punar āgāḥ preyasā preṣitaḥ kiṁ
varaya kim anurundhe mānanīyo 'si me 'ṅga

nayasi katham ihāsmān dustyaja-dvandva-pārśvaṁ
satatam urasi saumya śrīr vadhūḥ sākam āste

O friend of my dear one, has my beloved sent you here again? I should honor you, friend, so please choose whatever boon you wish. But why have you come back here to take us to him, who finds it difficult to give up his relationships in Mathurā? After all, gentle bee, his consort is the goddess Śrī, and she is always with him, staying upon his chest.

COMMENTARY: Recovering after a short time, she saw the bee return. Also Uddhava quickly went to get some water (to help her recover from fainting) and she saw him return. O dear friend! The bee was dear because it had returned. She thought that Kṛṣṇa had sent the bee back. Separation is difficult. Thus Lakṣmī stays on his chest constantly. O peaceful bee! You should not be friends with him (who is not peaceful).

Or though the bee was present, in madness she thought the bee had gone. When her mood changed, she thought the bee had returned. In lamentation, she utters this verse. Have you returned, sent by him? Since we are very proud, your desire was not fulfilled. Let that be. It is said that the words of a truthful messenger should never be ignored. Thus I must respect you (*māninīyaḥ*). I will do as you wish.

"I request that you come to Mathurā." O bee, beautiful to behold like the moon (*saumya*)! You are nice to see but have no intelligence! Will you take us to Mathurā? He is always with the women from whom he cannot separate. Our going there is useless. This is a statement of hatred. "When you come, he will give them up." Lakṣmī is famous for being his eternal favorite. He remains there happily (*kam*) with her (*sā*) on his chest, dominating him. This is uttered with envy.

Text 47.21

api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro 'dhunāste
smarati sa pitṛ-gehān saumya bandhūṁś ca gopān
kvacid api sa kathā naḥ kiṅkarīṇāṁ gṛṇīte
bhujam aguru-sugandhaṁ mūrdhny adhāsyat kadā nu

O Uddhava, does Kṛṣṇa now reside in Mathurā? Does he remember his father's houses, his relatives and the cowherd boys? O great soul! Does

he ever talk about us, his maidservants? When will he lay on our heads his aguru-scented hand?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ah! What have I been saying? I have not asked what I should have asked. Finally, with sincerity, gravity, humility, fickleness, and longing, with tears and choked voice she inquires from Uddhava. *Api* indicates a question. This should be understood for all the statements in the verse. O messenger (*bata*)! By convention *ārya-putra* refers to the son of the elderly Nanda. But he is actually our husband. The perception of other persons being our husbands is only an appearance. No one in any other place has had the *bhāvas* that we experienced for him from his childhood.

It was said:

iti gopyo hi govinde gata-vāk-kāya-mānasāḥ
kṛṣṇa-dūte samāyāte uddhave tyakta-laukikāḥ

The *gopīs,* whose words, bodies and minds were fully dedicated to Govinda, put aside all their regular work now that Kṛṣṇa's messenger, Uddhava, had arrived among them. SB 10.47.9

In addressing Kṛṣṇa as *ārya-putra,* Rādhā shows straightforwardness or sincerity. Is he now in Mathura? First, she asks this question, since there has been no news of him for a long time and as well she had heard that he had gone far away to the *gurukula.* On hearing this, out of pain, she asks this question first. Now she does not put on a pretense of anger. Nanda also did not ask this question. No news was heard because it was forbidden. He lived in Avantī secretly performing *gāyatrī puraścaraṇa.* He feared Jarāsandha and others would attack Mathurā if they learned he was absent from Mathurā. He also worried that the people of Vraja would be in great sorrow if they heard he was far away. Not knowing he had gone elsewhere, in asking the question she expresses censure. This indicates her gravity (*gāmbhīrya*). "O lady! He is living there happily." Fearing such an answer, she asks, "Does he remember his parents and others in Vraja?"

Dissatisfied with her previous question she asks many questions in succession. Included in that question is a question about the houses of Vraja. He now lives in Mathurā, and will stay in that attractive place a long

time, or is delayed there. But he is the only cause of living for the people of Vraja. Does the son of Nanda remember the houses of his father since he was born there? There were many houses because Nanda, going here and there in Vraja, built many houses in various places for the joy of his son, or because there were many palaces in Nandīśvara. The word "houses" indicates the places of various pastimes in which his mother and father cared for him during his infancy. Does he remember his relatives (*bandhūn*) such as Upananda and the cowherd boys like Śrīdāmā? Does he, the friend of Śrīdāmā, or the master of us *gopīs*, at some time or somewhere (*kvacit*) talk about us, since we are qualified by being his servants, having rendered him much service? This indicates humility (*dainyam*). *Kathāḥ* is in the plural because there are many servants in Vraja and many details in each topic. The topics were compositions with many incidents of various types. Another version has *kathām* in the singular.

When will he place his arm, fragrant with *aguru*, on our heads? She experiences the fragrance through intense meditation. This indicates her absorption in longing. Placing his arm on their heads to remove all obstacles indicates humility as his servants. This shows fickleness (*cāpalam*). By asking when this will happen, with the expression of uncertainty, she shows great despondency. The word *nu* indicates conjecture. After considering, she remains uncertain. This shows the height of the greatest longing.

By addressing Kṛṣṇa as *ārya-putra* she established herself as his wife. However later in the verse she thinks of herself as a servant, out of humility and lowness. However, she is actually his wife. Similarly, the unmarried *gopīs* said:

nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi patiṁ me kuru te namaḥ

O great potency of the Lord, O possessor of great mystic power and mighty controller of all, please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband. SB 10.22.4

śyāmasundara te dāsyaḥ karavāma tavoditam

O Śyāmasundara, we are your maidservants and must do whatever you say. SB 10.22.15

Kālindī says *ahaṁ tad-gṛha-mārjanī:* Now I am engaged as a sweeper in his palace. SB 10.83.11

Bata can also indicate lamentation. Why is he still in Mathurā? He should not stay there forever, but should come here quickly since he is Nanda's son (*ārya-putra*). His friends are all of good quality (*saumya-bandhūn*), and thus should be remembered.

Text 47.22

śrī-śuka uvāca
athoddhavo niśamyaivaṁ kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ
sāntvayan priya-sandeśair gopīr idam abhāṣata

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having heard this, Uddhava then tried to pacify the *gopīs*, who were most eager to see Kṛṣṇa. He thus spoke the following with the message of their beloved.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates the beginning of the message. Since it was unsuitable to begin the message immediately, when they were so disturbed by *prema*, he began speaking later (verse29). Hearing about the *gopīs'* previous love and lamentation (*evam*), he consoled them with the message from their lover. The messages themselves were also dear. The messages were dear since they were related to Kṛṣṇa. Or *priya* can mean "O dear Parīkṣit!" When the disturbance caused by *prema* lessened, it would be proper to hear the message. By starting with statements expressing the good fortune of the *gopīs*, he could counteract their misery, and make them give up their disturbance. In this way Uddhava began speaking.

Text 47.23.

śrī-uddhava uvāca
aho yūyaṁ sma pūrṇārthā bhavatyo loka-pūjitāḥ
vāsudeve bhagavati yāsām ity arpitaṁ manaḥ

Śrī Uddhava said: Certainly you *gopīs* are all-successful and are universally worshiped because you have dedicated your minds in this way to the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY: This is amazing (*aho*)! Or it expresses bliss. *Sma* means *eva* (emphatic). It can be placed with all the appropriate words praising the *gopīs*. You have attained all success, which even Lakṣmī has not attained. Thus you are worthy of worship (*pūjitāḥ*) by all people in all fourteen worlds. Out of joy he addresses them with *yūyam* and later out of devotion addresses with *bhavatyaḥ*. Your minds are fixed in the *antaryāmī* (*vāsudeve*), full of six qualities (*bhagavati*), or in the son of Vasudeva, who is directly the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa (*bhagavati*). *Vasudeva-gṛhe sākṣat bhagavān puruṣaḥ paraḥ*: the direct Lord, the highest person has appeared in Vasudeva's house. (SB 10.1.23) Or you fixed your minds on the son of the best Vasu, Nanda, the supreme person full of unparalleled beauty (*bhagavati*). By saying that Kṛṣṇa is supreme, he shows the *gopīs* that they have attained the highest success. They fixed their minds on him with the highest *prema*.

Text 47.24

dāna-vrata-tapo-homa japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ
śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate

Bhakti unto Kṛṣṇa is attained by charity, strict vows, austerities, fire sacrifices, japa, the study of Vedic texts, controlling the senses and by the performance of many other auspicious practices.

COMMENTARY: "Success is attained by attaining Kṛṣṇa, not by satisfaction of the mind." This is expressed in two verses (24-25). *Vrata* means austerities. *Tapaḥ* means following one's dharma. *Homa* means sacrificies. *Svādhyāya* means the study of the Vedas. *Saṁyama* means control of all the senses. *Dāna* means charity, and *japa* means chanting silently. Since these are necessary, and known among people as the best actions, they are clearly mentioned. By *jñāna* (*śreyobhiḥ*) and other methods such as liberation, one can also attain the Lord. *Vividhaiḥ* modifies all the items. There are various types of liberation such as *sālokya*, etc., according to Vedānta and Nyāya. The rest is clear. The order of methods is according to increasing effectiveness. By these methods certainly (*hi*), *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is accomplished. Otherwise, whatever else is attained by these methods is useless. *Dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁṣām*: *varṇāśrama-*

dharma of the human being, which does not produce attraction for topics of the Lord, is only wasted effort. (SB 1.2.8)

Text 47.25

bhagavaty uttamaḥ-śloke bhavatībhir anuttamā
bhaktiḥ pravartitā diṣṭyā munīnām api durlabhā

By your great fortune you have established an unexcelled standard of pure devotion for the Lord, most worthy of praise—a standard even the sages can hardly attain.

COMMENTARY: But you, by your conduct, have preached to the people incomparable *bhakti* called *prema* to the Lord, who manifests all his powers and who is most worthy of praise. This has produced good fortune (*diṣṭyā*). It gives the highest benefit to the whole world. It is not easily attainable by all persons. It is rare even for sages like Sanaka. *Bhakti* is the highest result. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa will automatically be controlled.

Text 47.26

diṣṭyā putrān patīn dehān sva-janān bhavanāni ca
hitvāvṛnīta yūyaṁ yat kṛṣṇākhyaṁ puruṣaṁ param

It is good fortune that you have left your sons, husbands, bodily comforts, relatives and homes in favor of the supreme Brahman in human form, who is known as Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: "Lakṣmī should be praised for having such *bhakti*. Since we however are not independent, we cannot perform such worship." This has been most auspicious. You have given up even brothers and sisters (*svajanān*) and accepted as your lover the supreme person called Kṛṣṇa, who manifests unlimited forms and qualities. Sons and others were rejected by rejecting affectionate relationships with them, or by completely rejecting them. Rejection of bodies means to neglect the body and to attain a death-like state. The order in the list is from more important to less important. *Ca* means *eva.* You are superior to Lakṣmī by your type of *bhakti*.

Text 47.27

sarvātma-bhāvo 'dhikṛto bhavatīnām adhokṣaje
viraheṇa mahā-bhāgā mahān me 'nugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ

You possess the highest prema for the Lord, O most glorious gopīs. Your separation from Kṛṣṇa is a display of mercy to me.

COMMENTARY: "Then we should not be separated from him." That is true. This has been done to show the special attraction of *bhakti*. You have shown *prema*, with separation, to the Lord who is beyond the senses (*adhoḥkṣaje*), by concentrating all your senses on him. O most fortunate women! This is possible for you most fortunate women but not for others. You are more fortunate than all his other devotees, what to speak of Lakṣmī.

My master is controlled by you alone. You have shown me great mercy.

Or "Does this indescribable *mahābhāva* (*mahān*) exist or not?" Since it has not been seen or heard about, the devotees cannot believe in it. But today directly experiencing it, I have developed a hope. You have shown me great mercy, or the Lord, by sending me here, has given great mercy.

Text 47.28

śrūyatāṁ priya-sandeśo bhavatīnāṁ sukhāvahaḥ
yam ādāyāgato bhadrā ahaṁ bhartū rahas-karaḥ

My good ladies, now please hear your beloved's message, which I, the confidential servant of my master, have come here to bring you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Consoling them and seeing they were in better condition, Uddhava then stated what had to be spoken. Or, upset on not seeing any decrease in their agitation, thinking that they would recover by hearing Kṛṣṇa's message, he simply began to speak. "But that message will not bring him here quickly." This message will bring happiness to you who are filled with the greatest longing, since it says that he will come quickly. For that purpose, I have come and no other. It will produce respect for him. They answer by saying, "We see nothing else he might consider worth remembering in these cow pastures of Vraja." (SB 10.47.5) Uddhava

identifies himself as a servant of his master (*bhartuḥ*). Because of that, Uddhava is suitable to carry a message because he is most trustworthy. He can also keep the message secret. O pure women (*bhadrā*)! You are most qualified for his message. The letter is most auspicious because it will produce respect for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 47.29

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
bhavatīnāṁ viyogo me na hi sarvātmanā kvacit
yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu khaṁ vāyv-agnir jalaṁ mahī
tathāhaṁ ca manaḥ-prāṇa- bhūtendriya-guṇāśrayaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: You are never actually separated from me, for I am the Soul of all creation. Just as the elements of nature—ether, air, fire, water and earth—are present in every created thing, so I am present within everyone's mind, life air and senses, and also within the physical elements and the modes of material nature.

COMMENTARY: You are certainly (*hi*) not separated from me at any time since I am the cause of everything (*sarvātmanā*). Or you are not separated from me in any way (*sarvātmanā*). You play in Vraja doing the *rāsa* dance eternally, in a special manifestation. The eternal pastimes are indicated. Or there is no separation because my *sphūrti* exists inside and outside everything.

An example is given. The former in the list are causes and the latter elements are effects. The causes are situated in the effects. Ether is situated in earth. Similarly, I am situated in your minds*, prāṇas,* senses, bodies and qualities. Or I am the shelter of the functions (*guṇa*) of your minds, *prāṇas,* bodies and senses. Being situated there, I manifest myself.

Text 47.30

ātmany evātmanātmānaṁ sṛje hanmy anupālaye
ātma-māyānubhāvena bhūtendriya-guṇātmanā

By myself I create, sustain and withdraw my form within myself by the power of my *cit-śakti,* with my natural senses and qualities for the jīvas.

COMMENTARY: You should not think that it is impossible for me to be situated with you in Vraja though I am in Mathurā, since I have inconceivable *śakti*. By my various powers I manifest myself, disappear and continually maintain myself in myself, since I am the basis, the cause, the action and the doer. I have no relationship with any other cause.

"You create by your *māyā* made of the three *guṇas*. What is that to us?" I manifest and disappear by the power of my *cit-śakti* (*ātma-māyānubhāvena*). "What use are these other forms of yours to us? We desire to attain you, the son of Nanda." I manifest my attractive form with natural (*ātmanā*) qualities and senses (*indriya-guṇa*) for all *jīvas* (*bhūta*).

Text 47.31

ātmā jñāna-mayaḥ śuddho vyatirikto 'guṇānvayaḥ
suṣupti-svapna-jāgradbhir māyā-vṛttibhir īyate

Being composed of pure knowledge, this *ātmā* is pure, distinct from everything material, though connected with the *guṇas.* We can perceive the soul through the three functions of material nature known as wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep.

COMMENTARY: "Why should one say that I am created by material *māyā*? Actually, the *jīva* has no relationship with the material body. What to speak of me, the Lord." That is explained in this verse. He gives an example. The *ātmā* is perceived by functions of the mind. Waking and other states created by these functions are *māyā*, not actual.

Or you are always seen by me. You are *ātmā*, my very self. He says this out of extreme respect. Or you are *ātmā* because of non-difference by intense *prema*. Because of mutual affection, there is no sense of difference. You are perceived by my mental functions during waking, sleep and dreaming. Though these are three states of the *jīva*, they are possible in special pastimes of the Lord also. Though seeing is not possible in deep sleep, the statement is made to express continuous seeing. Or deep sleep means *samādhi,* with great concentration.

"How are unfortunate persons like us qualified for being seen?" You are full of knowledge of the *jīva*, *īśvara* and *bhakti* (*jñāna-mayaḥ*). You are not touched by the *guṇas* of *māyā* (*śuddhaḥ*). You are different from matter

(*vyatiriktaḥ*). You are endowed with good qualities, proper age and eternal form (*guṇānvayaḥ*).

Or *ātmā* means "your bodies." "You could not see our material bodies." Those bodies are spiritual. They are full of knowledge, because they are pure, and thus completely different from material bodies (*vyatiriktaḥ*).

Text 47.32

yenendriyārthān dhyāyeta mṛṣā svapna-vad utthitaḥ
tan nirundhyād indriyāṇi vinidraḥ pratyapadyata

As a person just arisen from sleep may continue to meditate on a dream even though it is illusory, so by the agency of the mind one meditates on the sense objects, which the senses can then obtain. Therefore one should become fully alert and bring the mind under control.

COMMENTARY: No one except you can see me, revealing myself everywhere as the *antaryāmī,* stimulating all the senses, since they are attached to material objects. All of these people should restrain the mind from sense objects. By stating this he glorifies the *gopīs*.

When a person awakes, by the mind he thinks of sense objects seen in his dream, though they are false, and by that enjoys them with his senses. With attention, one should control the mind. Or being without *māyā* (*vinidraḥ*), my devotee attains me (*pratyapadyata*) in all his senses. Past tense is used to emphasize the attainment. Or to instill faith, the *gopīs'* conduct of previous births is described.

Text 47.33

etad-antaḥ samāmnāyo yogaḥ sāṅkhyaṁ manīṣiṇām
tyāgas tapo damaḥ satyaṁ samudrāntā ivāpagāḥ

According to intelligent authorities, this is the ultimate conclusion of all the Vedas, as well as all practice of yoga, Sāṅkhya, renunciation, austerity, sense control and truthfulness, just as the sea is the ultimate destination of all rivers.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Control of the mind is the conclusion of all scriptures (*āmnāyaḥ*), which give knowledge. Yoga (*aṣṭāṅga*), discriminating matter from spirit (*sāṅkhya*), taking *sannyāsa* (*tyāga*), performing austerities according to scripture(*tapaḥ*), controlling the senses (*dama*), and truth (*satyam*) are the methods mentioned in the scriptures. Truth means avoiding deception and acquisition of wealth in the various processes. Yoga and Sāṅkhya are general processes for everyone. Renunciation is for the *sannyāsi,* austerity is for the *vanaprastha,* sense control is for the *brahmacārī* and truth is for the *gṛhastha.* Or *tyāga* means giving in charity, an act for the *gṛhastha*. Truth means seeing equally, an act for the *sannyāsi.* Or, the actions mentioned are the chief actions for everyone. With all these meanings, the conclusion is the same: control the mind.

Text 47.34

yat tv ahaṁ bhavatīnāṁ vai dūre varte priyo dṛśām
manasaḥ sannikarṣārthaṁ mad-anudhyāna-kāmyayā

But the actual reason why I, your beloved, have stayed far away from your eyes is that I wanted to intensify my meditation upon you and thus draw my mind closer to you.

COMMENTARY: "Do not cheat us. We want to see you directly. Why do you delay so long?" Two verses (34-35) answer. The word *tu* indicates a different topic. Since I am dear (*priyah),* I should not stay far away. Yet I remain far away (*dūre varte*) from your eyes (*dṛśām*). But I am present to your other senses. I desire to meditate on you always in order to bring my mind near you. The meaning is this. You, giving up everything, concentrate your minds on me, but I do not do so to the same extent. Thus, in great shame I remain in Mathurā in order to attain closeness with you always in my mind.

Text 47.35

yathā dūra-care preṣṭhe mana āviśya vartate
strīṇāṁ ca na tathā cetaḥ sannikṛṣṭe 'kṣi-gocare

When her lover is far away, a woman thinks of him more than when he is present before her.

COMMENTARY: He explains how this will be accomplished. Just as when even (*api*) a man who loves women is far away, his mind becomes absorbed in women (*āviśya vartate*), so the mind of women also becomes absorbed in the man.

Text 47.36

mayy āveśya manaḥ kṛtsnaṁ vimuktāśeṣa-vṛtti yat
anusmarantyo māṁ nityam acirān mām upaiṣyatha

Because your minds are totally absorbed in me and free from all other engagement, remembering me always, you will very soon have me again in your presence eternally.

COMMENTARY: "You should not stay in Mathurā for a long time to accomplish that." That is true. That is now accomplished. Understand that I have almost come. You will attain me eternally very soon. There will no longer be separation. "Being without power, we do not see the method." Your minds have given up unlimited desires, and easily, naturally, become absorbed in me, Kṛṣṇa, who attracts your hearts. By your remembrance of me, I become attracted and will come here. There is no need for you to practice some other method.

Text 47.37

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

O fortunate ladies! Although some gopīs had to remain in the cowherd village and so could not join the *rāsa* dance to sport with me at night in the forest, they attained me by thinking of my potent pastimes.

COMMENTARY: "We cannot believe you." While I played in that forest (*vane asmin*)(suggesting that his mind is always thinking of that) some *gopīs* remained in Vraja. "That forest" also suggest the *gopīs* quickly went there. But non attainment of the *rāsa* dance did not happen (*mā āpuḥ*) for some. By thinking of the *rāsa* dance, they attained me because they were fortunate to be your friends (*kalyānyaḥ*). This illustrates the power of meditating on me. You should have faith in this.

Text 47.38

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ priyatam ādiṣṭam ākarṇya vraja-yoṣitaḥ
tā ūcur uddhavaṁ prītās tat-sandeśāgata-smṛtīḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The women of Vraja were pleased to hear this message from their dear Kṛṣṇa. His words having revived their memory, they addressed Uddhava as follows.

COMMENTARY: Hearing that instruction (*evam*), the women attained knowledge (*smṛtīḥ*) by that message. Or their lamentation still did not cease. They all lamented by the force of remembrance caused by the message. That is the meaning of *evam*. Hearing such a message, did they become pleased (*prītāḥ*)? Actually, they did not, because they were women of Vraja: their very life was to see him. Strong remembrance of him arose by that message. In that condition they spoke. Or remembering that their friends had attained Kṛṣṇa in the *rāsa* dance, having come on his order, they were pleased because they had gained faith.

Text 47.39

gopya ūcuḥ
diṣṭyāhito hataḥ kaṁso yadūnāṁ sānugo 'gha-kṛt
diṣṭyāptair labdha-sarvārthaiḥ kuśaly āste 'cyuto 'dhunā

The gopīs said: It is very good that Kaṁsa, the enemy and persecutor of the Yadus, has now been killed, along with his followers. And it is also very good that Acyuta is living happily in the company of his well-wishing friends and relatives, whose every desire is now fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having been somewhat consoled by their memories, the *gopīs* then spoke to show that they had spontaneously experienced his *sphūrtis* during separation in the *prakaṭa* manifestation. Ah *(aho)!* Are we happy with this message or not? His happiness is our happiness. With that intention they first rejoice. Since the Yadus have attained unlimited happiness, there is no worry for their needs. He is happy. He does not deviate from that happiness (*acyutaḥ*). Previously Kṛṣṇa had received great suffering because

of Kaṁsa. Now that is not so. By good fortune, his enemy (*ahitaḥ*) who made the Yadus suffer (*agha-kṛt)* is dead. Kṛṣṇa is happy with the Yadus whom he has attained (*āptaiḥ*).

Text 47.40

kaccid gadāgrajaḥ saumya karoti pura-yoṣitām
prītiṁ naḥ snigdha-savrīḍa-hāsodārekṣaṇārcitaḥ

Gentle Uddhava, is the elder brother of Gada now bestowing on the city women the pleasure that actually belongs to us? We suppose those ladies worship him with excellent glances full of affectionate, shy smiles.

COMMENTARY: In classifying the various speakers by the different statements, some connection between the statements can be made. They ask about his comfortable situation with eagerness and greed for *prema*. Since he associates with the city women, they describe the pleasing conduct of the city women. "They have excellent (*udāra*) glances and shy smiles. Does our (*naḥ*) master, the elder brother of Gada, please the city women?" Or they ask with pain in prema, "Now, will he be merciful to us? Though worshipped by the shy smiles and excellent glances of the city women, will he give pleasure to us (*nah*)?" The present tense is used for the future to indicate that it will happen soon.

Text 47.41

kathaṁ rati-viśeṣa-jñaḥ priyaś ca pura-yoṣitām
nānubadhyeta tad-vākyair vibhramaiś cānubhājitaḥ

Kṛṣṇa is an expert in all kinds of conjugal affairs and is the darling of the city women. How can he not become entangled, now that he's constantly adored by their enchanting words and gestures?

COMMENTARY: Does one need to ask? There is no doubt about this. He is pleasing with his dress, form and ornaments. He is worshipped by their words and coy gestures. Together, they show cleverness which increases their affection for each other. How can he not become attracted to them? This will definitely happen.

Or he will not be attracted by their words and gestures. He will not be controlled. He will be thoroughly adored by them alone. Or if you say that

he will not associate with them—that is not possible. This verse describes the situation. He will be attracted to them. He will not give pleasure to us.

Text 47.42

api smarati naḥ sādho govindaḥ prastute kvacit
goṣṭhi-madhye pura-strīṇām grāmyāḥ svaira-kathāntare

O honest Uddhava, does the king of Gokula ever remember us village girls during his free conversations with the city women?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They inquire sarcastically with longing. On some occasion—in an assembly of those city women—while talking on various subjects according to his desire (*svaira-kathāntare*) does he remember us village girls? He should remember us, since he is the king of Gokula (*govindaḥ*). O honest Uddhava (*sādho*)! You should not speak lies at all. Or *kvacit* can be supplied to other words in the sentence as well. Does he ever remember us on other occasions? Does he ever remember us while in the company of the city women? Does he ever remember us during free conversations?

Text 47.43

tāḥ kiṁ niśāḥ smarati yāsu tadā priyābhir
vṛndāvane kumuda-kunda-śaśāṅka-ramye
reme kvaṇac-caraṇa-nūpura-rāsa-goṣṭhyām
asmābhir īḍita-manojña-kathaḥ kadācit

Does he, whose is the subject of attractive talks worshiped by all, recall those nights in the Vṛndāvana forest, lovely with lotus, jasmine and the bright moon? He enjoyed with us, his beloved girlfriends, in the circle of the rāsa dance, which resounded with the music of ankle bells.

COMMENTARY: Ah! Does he remember us, after obtaining the city women? Does he ever remember the nights of the *rāsa* dance? This describes their qualification to be remembered by him. The plural is used to indicate that the *gopīs* were innumerable. He enjoyed on those nights in playing during the dance, while our and his ankle bells jingled. Or he was the subject of attractive talks in gatherings of *gopīs* after the dance.

The *gopīs* were the proper assistants. Vṛndāvana was the place. The autumn season with lotuses was the proper time. The ankle bells jingled while engaged in pastimes or while dancing. He spoke attractively when they requested him (*īḍita*). This was the proper cause of his enthusiasm.

Or does he remember those nights in which he enjoyed with us, whom he accepted as lovers (*priyabhiḥ*). The *devatās* appeared on vehicles at that time and praised him (*īḍita*) with songs attractive to him and the world, speaking about his cleverness. That should also be remembered. Or being the subject of attractive praise by the city women, does he remember those nights? The talks also praised those nights.

Text 47.44

apy eṣyatīha dāśārhas taptāḥ sva-kṛtayā śucā
sañjīvayan nu no gātrair yathendro vanam ambudaiḥ

Will that descendant of Daśārha return here and by the touch of his limbs bring back to life those who are now burning with the grief he has caused, just as Indra brings a forest back to life with his water-bearing clouds?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"If he remembers us, he would return. We do not believe that he will." They forget the message saying he would return out of longing generated by remembering the *rāsa* dance. Thus they ask if he will return. He is now king of the Dāśārhas, and is busy protecting them. We are suffering from the grief caused by his actions. The remedy is the touch of his limbs. If he does not do so, he will be known as an expert at being hard hearted and fearless in killing women. He should bring us completely to life (*sañjīvanayan*) by the touch of his limbs. The touch is like nectar.

The present tense is used to indicate that they cannot tolerate the delay in his coming and touching them. Indra with his clouds is similar to Kṛṣṇa with his touch because in both cases the relief is immediate. The rumbling of the clouds and the messages both annihilate suffering.

Text 47.45

kasmāt kṛṣṇa ihāyāti prāpta-rājyo hatāhitaḥ
narendra-kanyā udvāhya prītaḥ sarva-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

But why should Kṛṣṇa come here after winning a kingdom, killing his enemies? He will be pleased on marrying the daughters of kings, and will be surrounded by all his friends and well-wishers?

COMMENTARY: "If you say he will come, I say that will not happen." A *gopī* gives the reasons. He will marry princesses. Even if you say he has no interest in the kingdom, it is impossible for him to come. He stayed there in order to kill the enemies (*hatāhitaḥ*). Since that is finished, why does he still not come?

"He will come because of your pain in separation." He will be happy to marry princesses. This is a statement made in misery, showing that the princesses are superior to the *gopīs*. *Prītaḥ* is the past, though it should be in the future (He will be pleased when he will marry princesses.) The past is used to show the near future and the certainty of the event. "Even if that is so, he will come to please his mother, father and dear friends." In the city, he has obtained great friends, mother and father, etc. Why would he depend on others now? Or if he wants to come, he will be stopped by those friends.

Text 47.46

kim asmābhir vanaukobhir anyābhir vā mahātmanaḥ
śrī-pater āpta-kāmasya kriyetārthaḥ kṛtātmanaḥ

What use does this person who thinks himself great have for forest people or any others, since he is the master of Lakṣmī, has all possessions, and is fully satisfied?

COMMENTARY: "Depending completely on you, he will come." He has attained his goal (*arthaḥ kriyeta*). What use does he have for us? Or has he attained his goal by us? No. He is respected by the world or has conquered his senses (*mahātmanaḥ*). (He does not need us.)

"He desires to enjoy with you to complete the pastimes of *prema*, since he is the king of *rasa*." He is the lord of Lakṣmī. She has appeared to please him with *rasa*. What use are others to him? "He prefers you to Lakṣmī." He has already satisfied himself with us (*āpta-kāmasya*). "Then he was not

fully satisfied with that enjoyment." He is complete in himself (*kṛtātmanaḥ*). This is a statement of misery or sarcasm, since being controlled by his devotees he would never act like this.

Text 47.47

paraṁ saukhyaṁ hi nairāśyaṁ svairiṇy apy āha piṅgalā
taj jānatīnāṁ naḥ kṛṣṇe tathāpy āśā duratyayā

The greatest happiness is to renounce all desires, as even the prostitute Piṅgalā has declared. Yet even though we know this, we cannot give up our hopes of attaining Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The greatest happiness is definitely detachment. Even (*api*) the prostitute Piṅgalā has said this. Normally prostitutes would not say this. But that should not be considered. We do not know this.

Though we know that detachment is the greatest happiness, we have a desire for Kṛṣṇa which is difficult to overcome. We cannot give up that desire to attain him. "Why?" The son of Nanda attracts our minds. The desire for association with Kṛṣṇa, which is unfulfilled, agitates us.

tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā mad-arthe tyakta-daihikāḥ
mām eva dayitaṁ preṣṭham ātmānaṁ manasā gatāḥ
ye tyakta-loka-dharmāś ca mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham

The minds of those *gopīs* are always absorbed in me, and their very lives are ever devoted to me. For my sake they have abandoned everything related to their bodies, as well as dharma and other people. I alone am their dearest beloved and, indeed, their very self. Therefore, I take it upon myself to sustain them in all circumstances. SB 10.46.4

You should not think that we are like prostitutes. Kṛṣṇa himself says:

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

Simply because I have promised to return to them, my fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other. SB 10.46.6

The *gopīs* use a comparison of a lecher enjoying many women:

khagā vīta-phalaṁ vṛkṣaṁ bhuktvā cātithayo gṛham
dagdhaṁ mṛgās tathāraṇyaṁ jārā bhuktvā ratāṁ striyam

Birds abandon a tree when its fruits are gone, guests a house after they have eaten, animals a forest that has burnt down, and a lover the woman he has enjoyed, even though she remains attached to him. SB 10.47.8

To remove doubt that they are of this nature they say *api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro 'dhunāste:* O Uddhava, does Kṛṣṇa, our husband, now resides in Mathurā? (SB 10.47.21) In front of the greatest devotee Uddhava they give up all their reservations and speak directly.

Text 47.48

ka utsaheta santyaktum uttamaḥśloka-saṁvidam
anicchato 'pi yasya śrīr aṅgān na cyavate kvacit

Who can bear to give up the statements made by Kṛṣṇa? Although he shows no interest in her, Lakṣmī never moves from her place on his chest.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *gopīs* elaborate their last statement. What person (*kaḥ*), what to speak of women, can attempt (*utsaheta*) to give up, what to speak of actually giving up statements made by Kṛṣṇa? How could persons fixed in knowledge completely disregard (*santyaktum*) those statements, what to speak of forgetting him? His qualities and form are elaborately described (*uttamaḥśloka*). He made statements like the following:

na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ
sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ

I am not able to repay my debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahmā. SB 10.32.22

The words *santyaktum,* completely giving up, indicates that it is impossible to give up internal attachment and respect. Why is this said? He takes no interest in Lakṣmī. It is said:

nāham ātmānam āśāse mad-bhaktaiḥ sādhubhir vinā
śriyaṁ cātyantikīṁ brahman yeṣāṁ gatir ahaṁ parā

O *brāhmaṇa*! Without the devotees, who take shelter of only me, I do not desire to enjoy Lakṣmī. SB 9.4.64

Though Kṛṣṇa does not give regard to Lakṣmī, because of his greater regard for those with intense *anurāga,* she remains always on his chest as a golden line. She does not move from his chest.

Text 47.49

saric-chaila-vanoddeśā gāvo veṇu-ravā ime
saṅkarṣaṇa-sahāyena kṛṣṇenācaritāḥ prabho

Dear Uddhava, when Kṛṣṇa was here in the company of Balarāma, he served all these rivers, hills, forests, cows and flute sounds.

COMMENTARY: If we could forget him, our desire for him would decrease. But that does not happen. If we go to the water, we remember how the water served him. If we are in our houses, remembering them as a small piece of stone, we see the mountain, very high, which served him. If we enter the forest, then we remember how the forests served him. Water, land and forests all served him. *Ime* modifies all the items and indicates that they directly see these items.

Or because of the intense pain of separation, these items directly appeared to them. The names of Kṛṣṇa's friends are not directly mentioned because it would give rise to memories of Kṛṣṇa and great pain. The later items in the list are more effective in causing remembrance. Kṛṣṇa is with Balarāma or together with mutual affection they play happily. *Kṛṣṇena* means "by his playing which attracts the hearts of everyone." The rivers, mountains and forests also attract the hearts since they are places where he plays. *Ācaritāḥ* means "served to produce his play." Or combined with *veṇu-ravāḥ* it means "flute sounds were made." Balarāma accompanied Kṛṣṇa's song. This indicates great sweetness. The rivers, mountains and forests are naturally the play things of Kṛṣṇa. Or *ācaritāḥ* can mean "just now the cowherd boys begin to play their flutes." Because this arises in Vraja, it gives particular instruction to Uddhava.

Text 47.50

punaḥ punaḥ smārayanti nanda-gopa-sutaṁ bata
śrī-niketais tat-padakair vismartuṁ naiva śaknumaḥ

All these remind us constantly of Nanda's son. Because we see Kṛṣṇa's footprints, which are marked with fine symbols, we can never forget him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

All these items make us constantly remember Kṛṣṇa with intensity (*punaḥ punaḥ*). In great humility they address Uddhava as master (*prabho*). Or, you are capable at all times (*prabho*). Therefore at this place carry out proper actions. He is the son of Nanda. Those things make us remember him as the cowherd boy though from your instructions, with the greatest effort, we have been made to remember him as the Lord. We have no taste for *jñāna.* "You can forget him after forcibly giving up searching for him here and there." We cannot forget him because of his footprints marked with symbols *(niketaiḥ*) of beauty or all wealth (*śrī*) like the flag. Those foot prints are everywhere, with great variety according to the differing pastimes. The word *padakaiḥ* is used to indicate that the foot prints were small. Even now they continue to exist, though made previously.

Text 47.51

gatyā lalitayodāra- hāsa-līlāvalokanaiḥ
mādhvyā girā hṛta-dhiyaḥ kathaṁ taṁ vismarāma he

O Uddhava, how can we forget him when our intelligence has been stolen away by the charming way he walks, his excellent smile and playful glances, and his honeylike words?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"Covering your eyes with a cloth, controlling the mind by the intelligence, forgetting everything, you can then forget him." Our hearts have been stolen by the charming movements of his limbs (*gatyā*), by his excellent smile and playful glances. These items indicate his special love for us. The plural is used to indicate that he smiled and glanced at each of the *gopīs* individually. His words were sweet by sound and by meaning. By these three means (movement, love, and words) our intelligence has been

stolen. By what means can we forget his friendship or his movements, love and words? There is no way. Or, please teach us some other way.

Text 47.52

he nātha he ramā-nātha vraja-nāthārti-nāśana
magnam uddhara govinda gokulaṁ vṛjinārṇavāt

O master, O master of the goddess of fortune, O master of Vraja! O destroyer of all suffering, Govinda, please lift Gokula out of the ocean of distress in which it is drowning!

COMMENTARY: With a manifestation of great pain in *prema*, calling out as if the Lord were present, they cry with painful voices. O Kṛṣṇa, the form of concentrated bliss! Since you are full of bliss, you do not ignore the devotees.

O lord of Lakṣmī (*ramā-nātha*)! The word *he* is repeated out of great pain. Since you are the lord of Lakṣmī, you should not ignore other persons. O protector of Vraja (*vraja-nātha*)! Or O lover (*rama*), lord of Vraja, where there is no other lord except you (*anātha-vraja-nātha*)! You never ignore people who are suffering (*ārti-nāśana*)! By this, they refer to themselves. Save all the living beings of Gokula, drowning in the ocean of suffering. By showing yourself once, dissipating grief, bring everyone to life and make them happy. You must do this. O king of Gokula (*govinda*)! Use of the past form of *magna* (drowned) and the image of the ocean means that the situation cannot be counteracted. It indicates their hopeless condition.

Text 47.53

śrī-śuka uvāca
tatas tāḥ kṛṣṇa-sandeśair vyapeta-viraha-jvarāḥ
uddhavaṁ pūjayāṁ cakrur jñātvātmānam adhokṣajam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Kṛṣṇa's messages having relieved their fever of separation, the gopīs then worshiped Uddhava, recognizing him as nondifferent from their Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: After lamenting and falling on the ground unconscious for a moment, they recovered a little. At that time (*tataḥ*), they then worshipped Uddhava. Because Kṛṣṇa attracts everyone, hearing his

messages attracted their hearts. Kṛṣṇa was beyond the knowledge of the material senses and was also brought back to life after being under the axel of the cart (*adhokṣajam*). He pervades everywhere (*ātmanam*). Knowing this, with their internal and external pain arising from separation dissipated by the message about Kṛṣṇa, they worshiped Uddhava, the direct form of joy, because of bringing the message, and the best devotee, by praising and respecting him, in order to please him, or to please Kṛṣṇa, or to dissipate their lamentation.

Or having dissipated their pain, they then accepted Kṛṣṇa to be everywhere (*adhokṣajam*), and then worshipped Uddhava. This is a statement to pacify Parīkṣit. Or understanding that they would see their lover (*ātmanam*), the son of Nanda (*adhokṣajam*) now, according to his message "You are never actually separated from me" (SB 10.47.29) their pain was dissipated and they worshiped Uddhava.

Text 47.54

uvāsa katicin māsān gopīnāṁ vinudan śucaḥ
kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathāṁ gāyan ramayām āsa gokulam

Uddhava remained there for several months, dispelling the *gopīs'* sorrow by chanting the topics of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Thus he brought joy to all the people of Gokula.

COMMENTARY: He stayed in Vraja for several months –ten or eleven, in order to dispel the *gopīs'* sorrow. This was his main purpose in staying. He also stayed to sing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and give joy to the people, animals, birds and trees of Gokula. He gave happiness to elders like Upananda and his wife by telling that Kṛṣṇa offered respects, to friends like Śrīdāmā, by telling them of Kṛṣṇa's offering of embraces, and to the trees, birds and animals by Kṛṣṇa's asking about each's health. He recited stories of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Or he made them happy, in order to sing about Kṛṣṇa. Without their being happy, his singing would be useless since they would not hear it. This shows his skill as an advisor and a representative of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty. Or he especially (*vi*) destroyed (*nudan*) the *gopīs'* lamentation, by showing Kṛṣṇa. He was joyful by showing manifestations of Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

Text 47.55

yāvanty ahāni nandasya vraje ʼvātsīt sa uddhavaḥ
vrajaukasāṁ kṣaṇa-prāyāṇy āsan kṛṣṇasya vārtayā

All the days that Uddhava dwelled in Nanda's cowherd village seemed like a single moment to the residents of Vraja, for Uddhava was always discussing Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Uddhava, whose glories were previously described or giving joy to Gokula (*saḥ*), stayed for many days, which were like one moment for the people of Vraja. "Why?" The narrations of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes told by him or them (*kṛṣṇasya vārtayā*) produced the highest bliss by their very nature. Or Kṛṣṇa himself became present (*kṛṣṇa-vārtayā*).

Text 47.56

sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr vīkṣan kusumitān drumān
kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām

That servant of Kṛṣṇa was satisfied by giving them a direct association with Kṛṣṇa and seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees of Vraja.

COMMENTARY: Wandering with them in Vṛndāvana, Uddhava attained the highest happiness. He was the servant of the Lord, most attractive to him (*hareḥ*) because of receiving the Lord's mercy in various ways. He was fixed in serving the Lord directly in various ways. He enjoyed seeing the rivers and forests in order to make the people of Vraja directly remember Kṛṣṇa through relating his pastimes. In this way, he wandered about with them, seeing the qualities of the rivers and forest. On seeing a place of pastimes that Kṛṣṇa performed with the people of Vraja, Uddhava developed the highest bliss. This showed the greatness of the place. Or seeing Kṛṣṇa when he saw the flowering trees and the rivers of Vraja, he enjoyed and made the *gopīs* remember Kṛṣṇa, according to the instruction "You are not separate from me at any time." (SB 10.47.29)

Text 47.57

dṛṣṭvaivam-ādi gopīnāṁ kṛṣṇāveśātma-viklavam
uddhavaḥ parama-prītas tā namasyann idaṁ jagau

Seeing how the gopīs were always showing extreme symptoms because of their total absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was supremely pleased. Offering them all respect, he sang as follows.

COMMENTARY: *Evam ādi* means in the way described, including speaking in madness and constantly fainting. Or it means *ādi-gopīnām*, the eternal beloveds, the women of Vraja. He saw their *divyonmāda* state, caused by complete absorption in Kṛṣṇa. Directly understanding that, he offered respects to them, first with verses of praise. Or first he offered respects with great devotion and then sang verses loudly. He sang in a pleasant manner, being overjoyed (*parama-pritaḥ*) by seeing their special *prema,* previously unseen, for his Lord.

Text 47.58

etāḥ paraṁ tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo
govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ
vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca
kiṁ brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya

[Uddhava sang:] Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have attained prefect bodies, for they have achieved mahābhava for Govinda, the source of all forms of the Lord. Their pure love is desired by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brāhmaṇa, or even as Brahmā himself?

COMMENTARY: Desiring to understand the meaning of his words, I surrender to excellent Uddhava, best of the devotees, who understood the greatness of the *gopīs.*

These cowherd women living in Nanda's Vraja have attained the perfection of birth (*tanu-bhṛtaḥ*) by their wealth of *sādhana* on earth (*bhuvi*). They have developed special *prema* (*ruḍha-bhāvāḥ*) for Govinda, the Supreme Lord, the *antaryāmī* of all beings. That *prema* ignores everything else, and is filled with indescribable gestures, transformations, pain, and greed, with special *bhāvas* that astonish the world.

Sages and we as well desire this but do not attain it. The *gopīs* are more glorious than persons desiring liberation, liberated persons and devotees. This type of birth is the best. There is no perfection in being born as the creator of the universe, which is considered topmost. The plural is used (*janmabhiḥ*) to indicate respect for Brahmā or to indicate many births of Brahmās. One gets greater results from hearing about Kṛṣṇa than from being born as Brahmā. *Nikhlātmani* can also mean the *gopīs* have *rūḍha-bhāva*, or he who is dearest (*ātmani*) to all beings. No one else has such *bhāva* for him.

Or what is the use of Brahmā's birth, his form, his mentality, etc. (*ādibhiḥ*). The plural is used for respect or to indicate the total. Or what is the use of Brahmā's birth without such *bhāva*, if Brahmā does not have *rasa* (*arasasya*) for his topics? The *gopīs* with their *bhāva* which can be achieved by these topics are the best.

Text 47.59

kvemāḥ striyo vana-carīr vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ
kṛṣṇe kva caiṣa paramātmani rūḍha-bhāvaḥ
nanv īśvaro 'nubhajato 'viduṣo 'pi sākṣāc
chreyas tanoty agada-rāja ivopayuktaḥ

These simple women who wander about the forest are not spoiled by improper behavior. Rather they have achieved the highest level of mahābhāva for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul! It is true that the Supreme Lord awards his blessings even to an ignorant worshiper, just as nectar has its effect even when taken by an ignorant person.

COMMENTARY: An unqualified person like me can gain their association only by the special mercy of the Lord. These women whose glories have been described (*imāḥ*) are wanderers in the forest. Or they wander in the Lord's (*a*) forest, Vṛndāvana. They wander there with *prema* for him. Since Uddhava, in verse 61, aspires for the *gopīs* love, it is unsuitable that he calls them *vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*: contaminated with bad conduct. This is not possible for these women worthy of the highest respect. Therefore the meaning is this. What use are persons like me, contaminated by not doing proper actions? Or *vayam* (we) can be taken from the previous verse. We are contaminated. The plural is used to indicate others similar to oneself.

In great astonishment with hairs standing on end, gesturing, he speaks. There should be *mahābhāva* for the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa to the highest degree (*param*) for persons like me. Or they are women, and thus cannot approach the Lord out of shyness, but persons like me being male, attained the Lord in Mathurā. They wander in the forest whereas I live in the city. But such women have the outstanding quality of astonishing *mahābhāva.* Persons like me are contaminated with offense to Kṛṣṇa (*vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*). Association with such persons is very rare, since they are so outstanding. *Imāḥ* indicates that they have a great position.

Nanu indicates astonishment, doubt or certainty. The Lord awards visibly (*sākṣāt*) or with obstacles the highest benediction to persons ignorant of the glories of *bhakti* but who worships him sincerely, or who worships even in imitation, since he is the Lord, independent or since he is my master, most merciful, Kṛṣṇa. An example of giving benefit to a person who serves in ignorance, and *ābhāsa* of service, is given. A version with *nu* instead of *nanu* is a mistake in printing. Nectar taken even unknowingly or by smelling or touching (*upayuktaḥ*) has an effect. Though I did not know the glories of Kṛṣṇa or the *gopīs*, my contact with them has taken place by the influence of his association.

Text 47.60

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

When Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune, though she was intensely attracted to him, or to other consorts in the spiritual world whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women?

COMMENTARY: Though Lakṣmī is famous as being dear to the Lord (*nitānta-rateḥ*), she does not have the *prema* of these *gopīs*. The word *na* is placed first to emphasize the negation. That mercy was not given to Lakṣmī (*śriyaḥ*). The heavenly women such as Vimalā, Utkarṣiṇī and Jñānā have the aroma of lotuses as well as being tender and golden (*rucām*). This should

have qualified them for the *rāsa* dance, but they could not enter. Humans also could not enter (*anyāḥ*). The *gopīs* were embraced firmly by his arms. *Vraja-striyo ramādibho 'py uru-mādhurya-maṇḍitāh*: the women of Vraja had greater sweetness than Lakṣmī. (*Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*) Thus, the *gopīs* were qualified for the *rāsa* dance by their sweetness in form and nature, more than Lakṣmī and others.

Or the word *u* indicates astonishment. The extent of the excellence of *prema* (*nitānta-rateḥ*) shown to the *gopīs* at the *rāsa* dance was not given to even Lakṣmī (*śriyaḥ*).

gopyo labdhvācyutaṁ kāntaṁ śriya ekānta-vallabham
gṛhīta-kaṇṭhyas tad-dorbhyāṁ gāyantyas tam vijahrire

Having attained as their intimate lover Acyuta, the exclusive consort of the goddess of fortune, the *gopīs* enjoyed great pleasure. They sang his glories as he held their necks with his arms. SB 10.33.14

The *gopīs* attained Kṛṣṇa, who was the dearest (*ekānta-vallabham*) lover (*kāntam*) of Lakṣmī (*śriyaḥ*). This indicates that the *gopīs' prema* was the highest of all. Thus the *gopīs* say:

aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanaṁ
truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām
kuṭila-kuntalaṁ śrī-mukhaṁ ca te
jaḍa udīkṣatāṁ pakṣma-kṛd dṛśām

When you go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see you. And even when we can eagerly look upon your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, we think the creator was foolish in making eyelids. SB 10.31.15

If Lakṣmī has this position, what to say of the women of heaven? And what to say of the women of Vaikuṇṭha such as Dharaṇī and Līlā or others such as Kānti and Dakṣiṇā?

Text 47.61

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken their relatives and the path of dharma to obtain the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which even the Vedas pursue. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the gopīs bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: Having glorified the superiority of the *gopīs* over all others, Uddhava desires their service attitude, but thinks it is rare. He desires only a particle of dust from their lotus feet. *Aho* indicates lamentation, with greed for something very rare. He desires to be a shrub, creeper or grass of Vṛndāvana, where the *gopīs* walk. Trees are too tall to take the dust from their feet. Creepers are lower and grasses are even lower. This indicates his extremely humble position. Finally, he desires to be a blade of grass. Since this is a song glorifying the *gopīs*, he again sings with zeal. They gave up husbands and sons who should not be given up and with devotion (*bhejuḥ*) followed (*padavīm*) he who gives *prema* to his devotees (*mukunda*). Or they served (*bhejuḥ*) his path of coming and going (*padavīm*) by going out in the morning and evening to see him when he departed or arrived in Vraja. This shows their great *prema* for Mukunda.

"Giving up the family and the path of *dharma* is against the Vedas. Those who are respected by the devotees should not give these up." The Vedas also strive for his path but do not attain it. To attain something which the Vedas, which teach *dharma* and *jñāna*, cannot attain, it is proper to give them up. One should not be dependent on them. Dharma depends on the Vedas. Giving up dharma and the Vedas, one should worship only the Lord with special *bhāva*. Even now the Vedas strive to attain him.

tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyāṁ
yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhiṣekam
yaj-jīvitaṁ tu nikhilaṁ bhagavān mukundas
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajaḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Lord, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is sought even today by the Upaniṣads. SB 10.14.34

The *gopīs* attained the Lord. They are thus superior to the Vedas.

athaitat paramaṁ guhyaṁ śṛṇvato yadu-nandana
su-gopyam api vakṣyāmi tvaṁ me bhṛtyaḥ suhṛt sakhā

O beloved of the Yadu dynasty! Because you are my servant, well-wisher and friend, I shall now speak to you who listen well the supreme secret. SB 11.11.49

vāsudevo bhagavatāṁ tvaṁ tu bhāgavateṣv aham
kimpuruṣānāṁ hanuman vidyādhrāṇāṁ sudarśanaḥ

Among those entitled to the name Bhagavān, I am Vāsudeva, and indeed, you, Uddhava, represent me among the devotees. I am Hanumān among the Kimpuruṣas, and among the Vidyādharas, I am Sudarśana. SB 11.16.29

Kṛṣṇa says that Uddhava is the best of the devotees and is qualified for direct service and mercy of the Lord. Why should he pray in this manner? I have not attained such *bhakti* since I did not give up my relatives. “Householders should not give up their families. That is against the Vedas.” But the Vedas also strive to attain a similar state. Brahmā, the guru of the devotees and the *śrutis*, gurus which give knowledge, did not attain him. Giving up the Vedas to attain him, following the *gopīs*, I should take birth as a shrub to touch the dust from their lotus feet. By such a prayer recited by Uddhava, realizing their glories, the *gopīs* supreme position is made clear.

tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyāṁ
yad gokule ’pi katamāṅghri-rajo-’bhiṣekam
yaj-jīvitaṁ tu nikhilaṁ bhagavān mukundas
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajaḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Lord,

Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is sought even today by the Upaniṣads. SB 10.14.34

But Uddhava's prayer is different from Brahmā's. Brahmā does not have the service attitude of Uddhava. Since he has four heads, he cannot remain in Vraja for long. Thus he prays for birth as some grass to attain the dust of the feet of anyone in Vraja. Uddhava however prays for a service attitude like the *gopīs*, with special *bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa, for great sweetness, not being fully satisfied after special *bhāva* had arisen, with a wealth of mercy from the inhabitants of Vraja by staying there a long time and serving. This he suitably expresses in this verse.

Text 47.62

yā vai śriyārcitam ajādibhir āpta-kāmair
yogeśvarair api yad ātmani rāsa-goṣṭhyām
kṛṣṇasya tad bhagavataḥ caraṇāravindaṁ
nyastaṁ staneṣu vijahuḥ parirabhya tāpam

The goddess of fortune herself, along with Brahmā and all the other devatās, and the best of yogīs, can worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa only within their minds. But during the rāsa dance Kṛṣṇa placed those feet upon these gopīs' breasts, and by embracing those feet, the gopīs gave up all distress.

COMMENTARY: "Generally, all devotees give up their family members to attain the lord. What is special about the *gopīs*?" They have a glorious position because of a very rare attainment. Lakṣmī has worshipped his feet by massaging them in *prema*. Brahmā (*aja*) and Śiva (*ādibhiḥ*) have worshipped those feet. *Ajā* can also refer to *yogamāyā*, served by Brahmā. *Ādibhiḥ* can mean Vidyā and other *śaktis*. Liberated souls (*āpta-kāmaiḥ*) also worshipped those feet because the feet were reddish, destroying all suffering and flowing with *madhura-rasa*. Or they worshipped the feet as the most excellent goal, by the mercy of devotees. They take shelter of those feet with the understanding that liberation was useless,. The devotees (*yogeśvaraḥ*) also worshipped those feet. They all worshipped the feet in their pure minds by meditation. They all worshipped in their minds because they did not obtain a direct association with the Lord.

Or instead of *yad, sadā* is sometimes seen. This may modify the last sentence. The feet were always on the *gopīs'* breasts.

evaṁ śaśāṅkāṁśu-virājitā niśāḥ
sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ
siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-sauratāḥ
sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ

With *gopīs* firmly attached to him with *anurāga,* Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always pure, who had fixed in his mind enjoyment with them, served the nights lit by the rays of the moon—all the nights which give shelter to poetic topics or *rasa* in autumn. SB 10.33.25

Thus the *gopīs'* attainment was most rare. The order of the persons is from inferior to superior, starting from Brahmā. This was stated by Akrūra also. Being worshipped by Brahmā and others, the feet are shown to yield all results, to be the highest goal, and to be most worthy of worship.

Arcitam is in the past tense. Now that Kṛṣṇa has appeared in Gokula complete with all *aṁśas* and plays there with absorption, others cannot worship him. The *gopīs* placed on their breasts the feet of Kṛṣṇa, the form of the highest bliss, who reveals his unlimited powers—the feet of Kṛṣṇa, who is my Lord, who acts independently. Uddhava remembers Krṣṇa, served by many, with his greatness of form and quality that he experienced, with the arousal of *prema* from prolonged separation. Or Kṛṣṇa is he who is inconceivable in form and qualities.

His feet are compared to a lotus because of their redness, ability to remove pain and because they flow with sweet *rasa*. In the play (*goṣṭhyam*) of the *rāsa* dance, or at a gathering at the beginning of the dance, the *gopīs* placed those feet on their breasts.

kācid añjalināgṛhṇāt tanvī tāmbūla-carvitam
ekā tad-aṅghri-kamalaṁ santaptā stanayor adhāt

A slender *gopī* respectfully took in her joined hands the betel nut he had chewed, and another *gopī,* burning with desire, put his lotus feet on her breasts. SB 10.32.5

One *gopīs* represents many. Or the *gopīs* began asking questions:

bhajato 'nubhajanty eka eka etad-viparyayam
nobhayāṁś ca bhajanty eka etan no brūhi sādhu bhoḥ

The *gopīs* said: Some people reciprocate the affection only of those who are affectionate toward them, while others show affection even to those who are indifferent or inimical. And yet others will not show affection toward anyone. Dear Kṛṣṇa, please properly explain this matter to us. SB 10.32.16

While asking, they placed his feet on their breasts, with firm embraces.

sabhājayitvā tam anaṅga-dīpanaṁ
sahāsa-līlekṣaṇa-vibhrama-bhruvā
saṁsparśanenāṅka-kṛtāṅghri-hastayoḥ
saṁstutya īṣat kupitā babhāṣire

Kṛṣṇa had awakened romantic desires within the *gopīs,* and they honored him by glancing at him with playful smiles, gesturing amorously with their eyebrows, and massaging his hands and feet as they held them in their laps. Even while worshiping him, however, they felt somewhat angry, and thus they addressed him as follows. SB 10.32.15

Or being strong embraced by the Lord, they placed his feet on their breasts, embraced them and completely destroyed the pain of separation or the fever of love. *Vai* indicates that it is well known. Akrūra said:

yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ
go-cāraṇāyānucaraiś carad vane
yad gopikānāṁ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitam

Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and all the other *devatās,* by Lakṣmī and her associates and by devotees in this world, as well as the followers of Pañcarātra. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the forest while herding the cows with his companions, and those feet are smeared with the *kuṅkuma* from the *gopīs'* breasts. SB 10.38.8

The others worshipped those feet in their minds. The *gopīs* with special pastimes directly embraced those feet. Their glory is self-evident. Brahmā and others do not even meet Kṛṣṇa. The liberated souls do not embrace those feet. The ordinary devotees do not place the feet on their breasts.

And Lakṣmī does not participate in the *rāsa* dance. By the power of association with the *gopīs*, Uddhava developed a similar *bhāva*. He achieved intimate friendship with the *gopīs*. Thus he endeavored to destroy their pain of separation at that time.

Or seeing the great beauty of Kṛṣṇa's feet, Lakṣmī, bewildered, worshipped those feet by doing austerities to attain him.

dhanyeyam adya dharaṇī tṛṇa-vīrudhas tvat-
pāda-spṛśo druma-latāḥ karajābhimṛṣṭāḥ
nadyo 'drayaḥ khaga-mṛgāḥ sadayāvalokair
gopyo 'ntareṇa bhujayor api yat-spṛhā śrīḥ

This earth has now become most fortunate by the touch of your feet. The grass and bushes are most fortunate for the same reason, and the trees and creepers have been touched by your fingernails. The rivers and mountains are fortunate, being touched by your feet. The birds and animals have been touched with your merciful glances. But above all, you have embraced the young cowherd women between your two arms—a favor hankered after by the goddess of fortune herself. SB 10.15.8

Text 47.63

vande nanda-vraja-strīṇāṁ pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
yāsāṁ hari-kathodgītaṁ punāti bhuvana-trayam

I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Mahārāja's cowherd village. When these gopīs loudly chant the glories of Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds.

COMMENTARY: I am completely unqualified for such direct service to the Lord. I will simply offer respects to the *gopīs* to attain such a *bhāva*. Or what qualification do I have to sing the glories of such persons? I offer respects to one particle of their foot dust which has fallen somewhere.

I offer respects to the feet of the women of Vraja, what to speak of those women who are dearest to him. Because all the Vraja women are related to these *gopīs*, I offer respects to all of them. By their loud singing (*udgītam*) with topics of the Lord who is all attractive (*hari*), the universe is purified of all contaminations up to liberation. It was previously said:

udgāyatīnām aravinda-locanaṁ
vrajāṅganānāṁ divam aspṛśad dhvaniḥ
dadhnaś ca nirmanthana-śabda-miśrito
nirasyate yena diśām amaṅgalam

As the ladies of Vraja loudly sang the glories of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, their songs blended with the sound of their churning, ascended to the sky and dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction. SB 10.46.46

Or they sang loudly as they were topics of the Lord. They sang loudly with the glorification of the Lord. Or their singing was *hari-kathā.* I should sing their glorification. I do not have fear of committing an offense to the Yadus by staying a long time here. I associate with them, directly glorifying them and offering them respects. Though he is directly meeting the *gopīs*, he expresses himself indirectly with *nanda-vraja-strīnām* to indicate their great position. Or he speaks indirectly out of respect. Or he speaks indirectly because the *gopīs* would be ashamed of their direct glorification and would not tolerate it. Words like *etā* and *āsām* in other verses are used to indicate proximity to them or to indicate that they are always present in his heart and he can perceive them directly.

Text 47.64

śrī-śuka uvāca
atha gopīr anujñāpya yaśodāṁ nandam eva ca
gopān āmantrya dāśārho yāsyann āruruhe ratham

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Uddhava, the descendant of Daśārha, then took permission to leave from the gopīs and from mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. He bade farewell to all the cowherd men and, about to depart, mounted his chariot.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to Uddhava, the best of Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees, who prayed for birth as grass in order to touch the dust from the *gopis'* lotus feet.

Atha indicates another time. *Eva* means *api. Ca* indicates all others. He said farewell to all the male and female servants, cows and other entities. In order of degree of *prema*, he spoke to each group, starting with the *gopīs*. To benefit the Yadus (*dāśarhaḥ*), he departed. By helping others (not the

Yadus), the Yadus would be in danger. *Āruruhe* means he started to mount the chariot.

Text 47.65

taṁ nirgataṁ samāsādya nānopāyana-pāṇayaḥ
nandādayo 'nurāgeṇa prāvocann aśru-locanāḥ

As Uddhava was about to leave, Nanda and the others approached him bearing various items of worship. With tears in their eyes they addressed him as follows with *anurāga.*

COMMENTARY: As Uddhava was leaving, Nanda and others approached him, gathering together from far off (*samāsādya*). Or understanding that he was going, they spoke to him. He tried to go many times but gave up after going a short distance or long distance. They held items given by Yaśodā like fresh butter, milk and sweets for Kṛṣṇa, with her own seal. For Balarāma, for Devakī and others, she made separate packages. The *gopīs* made *guñja* necklaces for Kṛṣṇa. Śrīdāmā and other friends sent forest fruits and roots that he liked. For Kṛṣṇa, Nanda sent musk and necklaces of elephant pearls and for Vasudeva matured ghee and for Ugrasena milk products. They carried these various articles in their hands while tears of love filled their eyes. They spoke with painful, choked voices, attracting the hearts of all (*provācan*).

Text 47.66

manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ
vāco 'bhidhāyinīr nāmnāṁ kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu

[Nanda and the other cowherds said:] May our mental functions always take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, may our words always chant his names, and may our bodies always bow down to him and serve him.

COMMENTARY: May our mental functions take shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, who is directly Bhagavān. This means that he should appear to everyone internally. May our words or voices chant his names such as Kṛṣṇa, Dāmodara and Govinda. Or the plural "names" is used to show respect. Our voices should chant the name Kṛṣṇa. Our bodies should offer respects with devotion. We should also do menial services with our bodies

(*ādiṣu*). They pray for *bhakti* with the engagement of mind, words and body.

Though Nanda has *vātsalya-bhāva* he prays for the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's feet. This is because of the lack of control and misery arising from separation. Or though Nanda tried to speak, his throat was choked with tears. Thus other cowherds spoke. *Nandādayaḥ* is a *tad-guṇa-saṁvijñāna bahuvrīhi* compound. He would never say "May our mental functions take shelter of his feet." He already said that he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa:

smaratāṁ kṛṣṇa-vīryāṇi līlāpāṅga-nirīkṣitam
hasitaṁ bhāṣitaṁ cāṅga sarvā naḥ śithilāḥ kriyāḥ

As we remember the wonderful deeds Kṛṣṇa performed, his playful sidelong glances, his smiles and his words, O Uddhava, we forget all our material engagements. SB 10.46.21

Text 47.67

karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇānāṁ yatra kvāpīśvarecchayā
maṅgalācaritair dānai ratir naḥ kṛṣṇa īśvare

Wherever we are made to wander about this world by the Supreme Lord's will, in accordance with the laws of karma, may our good works and charity always grant us love for Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: We do not want anything other than *kṛṣṇa-prema* by auspicious acts and the *bhakti* requested. Wherever we many wander on earth or upper planets by results of karma given by the will of the Lord, by doing auspicious acts like *nitya-naimittika karmas* and by giving cows, may we have *rati* for Kṛṣṇa. Giving cows is included in auspicious acts, but is mentioned separately because Nanda was very generous.

Or by prayers, our mental functions, auspicious acts and charity, offered to the Lord, may we develop *rati* for him. The plural is used to indicate that each act is done many times.

Na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣṇavānāṁ tu vidyate: the devotees are not bound by karma and birth. (*Padma Purāṇa*) The devotees do not wander by karma. However, the eternal associates of the Lord in Vraja

identify themselves as persons in the material world, absorbing themselves in the pastimes according to the will of the Lord.

Text 47.68

evaṁ sabhājito gopaiḥ kṛṣṇa-bhaktyā narādhipa
uddhavaḥ punar āgacchan mathurāṁ kṛṣṇa-pālitām

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O ruler of men, thus honored by the cowherd men with attachment to Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndāvana, Uddhava went back to the city of Mathurā, which was under Kṛṣṇa's protection.

COMMENTARY: Honored in this way (*evam*) and by other means also, asking many times if Kṛṣṇa would return, Uddhava returned to Mathurā. Because they were cowherds, they worshipped him with *prema-bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. The cowherds had prayed in this way because of humility arising from *prema*. O King! You can understand this.

Or Uddhava returned to Mathurā because of the cowherds' *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa, to inform others of this (*kṛṣṇa-bhaktyā*). There was great joy when Uddhava (meaning joy) returned to his house. How were the people of Mathurā still happy in Uddhava's long absence, since he should be present there, giving advice? Mathurā was protected by Kṛṣṇa at that time. Because of Kṛṣṇa, Mathurā was much wealthier than previously.

Text 47.69

kṛṣṇāya praṇipatyāha bhakty-udrekaṁ vrajaukasām
vasudevāya rāmāya rājñe copāyanāny adāt

After falling down to pay his homage, Uddhava described to Kṛṣṇa the immense devotion of the residents of Vraja. Uddhava also described it to Vasudeva, Lord Balarāma and King Ugrasena and presented to them the gifts of tribute he had brought with him.

COMMENTARY: He fell down on the ground, offering respects, because he had *bhakti* by his nature and had returned after a long time, or in order to reveal a special message. He then spoke about the increase in *bhakti* due to separation, how because of seeing him—not because of his skill or Kṛṣṇa's message, the people of Vraja were pleased and gave up their sorrow and lamentation. "Why do they not come here?" They are people

of Vraja (*vrajakaukasām*). They desire to see you there only, and not in Mathurā. Uddhava spoke of their *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa (vāsudevāya) and Balarāma (*ca*). But he gave gifts to the king, Ugrasena. He did not speak to him about their devotion, since as a king, he feared he would be envious. Or *ca* means all of them. Paying respects to all, he spoke to all about the devotion in Vraja and gave everyone gifts.

Chapter Forty-eight
Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

Text 48.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
atha vijñāya bhagavān sarvātmā sarva-darśanaḥ
sairandhryāḥ kāma-taptāyāḥ priyam icchan gṛhaṁ yayau

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Next, after assimilating Uddhava's report, Kṛṣṇa, the soul of all beings and seer of everything, desired to satisfy the serving girl Trivakrā, who was troubled by amorous desire. Thus he went to her house.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to Kubjā whom Kṛṣṇa, dear to the city women, controlled by her *bhāva*, enjoyed with her.

Though the people of Vraja were pacified, internally they were not. Remembering his promise to Kubjā, or understanding that she was full of desire, and since he was *antaryāmī,* the soul of all, and sees everything (*sarva-darśanaḥ*), he went to her house. She was pained with a desire for pleasure with him (*kāma-taptāyaḥ*). For all that time, she arranged her house and remained waiting for him. He desired to please her (*prītam icchan*) because he was merciful to the miserable (*bhagavān*).

Text 48.2

mahārhopaskarair āḍhyaṁ kāmopāyopabṛṁhitam
muktā-dāma-patākābhir vitāna-śayanāsanaiḥ
dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir dīpaiḥ srag-gandhair api maṇḍitam

Trivakrā's home was decorated with expensive furnishings and replete with sensual accoutrements meant to inspire desire. There were flags, rows of strung pearls, canopies, fine beds and sitting places, fragrant with incense, oil lamps, flower garlands and aromatic sandalwood paste.

COMMENTARY: The furnishings (*upaskara*) were clothes and crystal, or the furnishings are described with mention of pearls, etc. These items were within the house and flags (*patāka*) were on top of the house. Fragrance

(*surabhibhiḥ*) can be applied to all the suitable items (fragrant incense, fragrant garlands, etc.)

Text 48.3

gṛhaṁ tam āyāntam avekṣya sāsanāt
sadyaḥ samutthāya hi jāta-sambhramā
yathopasaṅgamya sakhībhir acyutaṁ
sabhājayām āsa sad-āsanādibhiḥ

When Trivakrā saw him arriving at her house, filled with joy, she at once rose from her seat excitedly. Coming forward graciously with her girlfriends, she respectfully greeted Kṛṣṇa who did not deviate from his promise by offering him an excellent seat and other articles of worship.

COMMENTARY: Seeing him from far off, she left her seat while trembling. Though (*hi*) agitated (*jāta-saṁbhramāḥ*), she came forward, closely (*upa-saṅgamya*), with her friends. Or being extremely (*hi*) agitated, and unable to move by herself, with friends she welcomed Kṛṣṇa with a seat, foot washing, etc. He came because he does not fail to uphold his word (*acyutam*).

Text 48.4

tathoddhavaḥ sādhutayābhipūjito
nyaṣīdad urvyām abhimṛśya cāsanam
kṛṣṇo 'pi tūrṇaṁ śayanaṁ mahā-dhanaṁ
viveśa lokācaritāny anuvrataḥ

Uddhava was also worshipped properly, but he simply touched his seat and sat on the floor. Then Kṛṣṇa, imitating the manners of human society, quickly made himself comfortable on a luxurious bed.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Uddhava was similarly (*tathā*) welcomed properly (*sādhutayā*) by Kubjā. With devotion he touched the seat and sat on the ground. Or he offered respects to it to please Kubjā. After being seated for worship, Kṛṣṇa got up and quickly sat on the bed studded with gems (*mahā-dhanam*) within the room. The reason is given. He acted like a human being who, entering the

woman's house, quickly sits on the bed freely for pleasure. He followed the habits of ordinary men (*anuvrataḥ*), since he acts like a human by his own decision. It should be understood that it was night at that time.

Text 48.5

sā majjanālepa-dukūla-bhūṣaṇa
srag-gandha-tāmbūla-sudhāsavādibhiḥ
prasādhitātmopasasāra mādhavaṁ
sa-vrīḍa-līlotsmita-vibhramekṣitaiḥ

Trivakrā had prepared herself by bathing, anointing her body, and dressing in fine garments, by putting on jewelry, garlands and perfume, and also by chewing betel-nut, drinking honey, and so on. She then approached the consort of Lakṣmī with shy, playful smiles and coquettish glances.

COMMENTARY: The ointment (*anulepa*) was made of sandalwood and *kuṅkuma*. Special fragrance (*gandha*) is made from sandalwood, *aguru* and other substances. *Sudhā* means thick milk, slightly warm. Or *sudhāsava* means honey. *Ādibhiḥ* indicates *tilaka, kajjala* and other accessories. The list is in order of increasing excellence or in order of dressing the body. She approached the beloved of Lakṣmī (*mādhavam*) slowly (*upasasāra*). This indicates her great fortune. Or *mādhavam* indicates he who is endowed with various types of beauty, sweetness and cleverness, who appeared in the Madhu dynasty to manifest his unlimited qualities as Bhagavān.

Text 48.6

āhūya kāntāṁ nava-saṅgama-hriyā
viśaṅkitāṁ kaṅkaṇa-bhūṣite kare
pragṛhya śayyām adhiveśya rāmayā
reme 'nulepārpaṇa-puṇya-leśayā

Calling forward his beloved, who was anxious and shy at the prospect of this new contact, the Lord pulled her by her bangled hands onto the bed. Thus he enjoyed with that beautiful girl, because of her trace of devotion in offering ointment to the Lord.

COMMENTARY: *Vāmayā* (meaning beautiful, instead of *rāmayā*) indicates that she was qualified and had a form suitable for enjoyment with the Lord or that she had not developed the excellence of *prema* of other devotees (*vāma* meaning eager), even by seeing him. The words *kāntām, nava-sāṅgama* and *vāmayā* indicate the mercy of the Lord. He called her and took her forcibly by his hand since she did not come forward. Since she wore bangles, he held her hands above the bangles, since her arms were tender. He was merciful not only because she was beautiful, but because of her *bhakti*. She had offered him ointment with devotion (*puṇya*). Or she offered ointment which was greater than *puṇyas* like sacrifices which were like a drop of water in the ocean, compared to her offering.

Or, the phrase can be divided *anulepārpana-puṇya-la īsayā:* because she was the best type of devotee in offering ointments—since she had offered the ointment to Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, and directly, and at a special time.

Text 48.7

sānaṅga-tapta-kucayor urasas tathākṣṇor
jighranty ananta-caraṇena rujo mṛjantī
dorbhyāṁ stanāntara-gataṁ parirabhya kāntam
ānanda-mūrtim ajahād ati-dīrgha-tāpam

Simply by smelling the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and by the touch of his feet, Trivakrā cleansed away the burning desire Cupid had aroused in her breasts, chest and eyes. With her two arms she embraced between her breasts her lover, Kṛṣṇa, the personification of bliss, and thus she gave up her long-standing distress.

COMMENTARY: By skill in love, her pain arising from not attaining him was destroyed. Her eyes, chest and breasts were afflicted by Cupid. *Anaṅga-tapta* is compounded with *kucayoḥ*, since her breasts were most afflicted. Or in an indescribable way, she smelled his feet using her breasts, chest and eyes. The Lord is called Ananta because he does not allow (*an*) the devotee to be destroyed (*anta)* by the pain of separation, or because he has no end (*ananta*) of qualities like mercy and cleverness. She removed the pain of desire (*rujaḥ*) by his feet or by his feet along with smelling him. After enjoying with him, she embraced him who was dear (*kāntam*) and the form of bliss, or he who was the form of beauty and bliss (*kāntam*

ānanda-mūrtim). This indicates that he gave her happiness and was happiness itself. Immediately she gave up the pain of not attaining him, though it had lasted for a long time.

Text 48.8

saivaṁ kaivalya-nāthaṁ taṁ prāpya duṣprāpyam īśvaram
aṅga-rāgārpaṇenāho durbhagedam ayācata

Having thus gotten the inaccessible Supreme Lord by the simple act of offering him body ointment, unfortunate Trivakrā submitted to the bestower of bhakti the following request.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

She had attained the Lord who was supremely independent and most difficult to attain, just by offering ointment to him. *Kaivalya* means one-pointed devotion, or pure *bhakti,* as in the following. *kaivalya-sammata-pathas tv atha bhakti-yogaḥ: bhakti-yoga* is the path approved as *kaivalya. (*SB 2.3.12) That is the explanation of Śrīdhara Svāmī. It is also said *apavargaś cāpi bhavati:* one achieves liberation in the form of *bhakti.* (SB 5.19.18) Thus *kaivalyla-natham* means the person capable of bestowing *bhakti.* She had attained in a remarkable manner (*prāpya*) the person who could bestow *bhakti.* She is called *durbhāgā* because she had been a hunchback and a servant, rather than a *gopī* endowed with the qualities of Lakṣmī by nature. It is amazing (*aho*) that she made a request for a most rare position to be mentioned in the next verse. Her misfortune however was in the past as in the case of the *brāhmaṇa:*

kim anena kṛtaṁ puṇyam avadhūtena bhikṣuṇā
śriyā hīnena loke 'smin garhitenādhamena ca

What pious acts has this unkempt, impoverished *brāhmaṇa* performed? People regard him as lowly and contemptible, yet the spiritual master of the three worlds, the abode of Goddess Śrī, is serving him reverently. SB 10.80.25

Text 48.9

sahoṣyatām iha preṣṭha dināni katicin mayā
ramasva notsahe tyaktuṁ saṅgaṁ te ’mburuhekṣaṇa

[Trivakrā said:] O beloved, please stay here with me for a few days more and enjoy. I cannot bear to give up your association, O lotus-eyed one!

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Another version has *sāhoṣyatām* (*sā aha uṣyatām*). However, the previous verse already said that she asked. Thus there would be an unnecessary repetition of words if this version were accepted. You should stay with me (*saha uṣyatām*) in my house (*iha*). The goal is stated: enjoy with me a few days. “But I have many other engagements.” But I cannot bear to give up your association. Wherever you go, I will go. Otherwise I will give up my life. “Why?” O lotus eyed one! I cannot give you up because all my senses are attracted to your supreme beauty and qualities.

Text 48.10

tasyai kāma-varaṁ dattvā mānayitvā ca māna-daḥ
sahoddhavena sarveśaḥ sva-dhāmāgamad ṛddhimat

Promising her the fulfillment of this desire, considerate Kṛṣṇa, Lord of all beings, paid Trivakrā his respects and then returned with Uddhava to his own supremely opulent residence.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He gave her the boon she desires (*kāma-varam*). “I will come and enjoy with you.” This shows that she did not have the pure *prema* of the *gopīs*.

yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu
tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit
kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyuṣāṁ naḥ

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in you. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as you roam about on the forest path. SB 10.31.19

The *gopīs'* happiness was caused by Kṛṣṇa's happiness. But still he accepted Kubjā, though there were thousands of Lakṣmīs in Mathurā. This was his supreme mercy. The cause of his mercy is explained. He was *māna-daḥ*: he was a giver of respect.

Just as he came with Uddhava, he left with Uddhava. Following the custom, he went with Uddhava, fixed in the highest principles of dharma, in order to avoid criticism from the public. Actually he went with Uddhava because he had great affection for Uddhava.

He went to Vasudeva's inner apartment. He did all of this according to his own desire for pastimes since he was the Lord of all beings (*sarveśaḥ*). That place was endowed with a wealth (*ṛddhimat*) of all objects to be used in service by all types of devotees. Therefore it was a suitable place to go.

There is a story in *Māthura-hari-vaṁśa.* In a previous life Kubjā was a princess. She developed attraction for Kṛṣṇa by hearing his qualities being glorified by Nārada. Later the king asked Nārada for a suitable groom for her. He said, "I will ask the princess. Who does she desire?" When asked, she said, "I want the person whom you glorified as the supreme to be my husband." When Nārada said that it was impossible, she said, "I will marry him after millions of births." Hearing that, Nārada taught her a way to attain Kṛṣṇa as her husband and she performed austerities for a long time. Then a voice from the sky said, "You will be the hunchback Kubjā in your next life and by my touch become beautiful. Then I will be your husband." Then she was born in a merchant's house belonging to Kaṁsa's best minister and Kaṁsa assigned her to supply fragrances to him. Thus she attained mercy by offering him fragrance as expressed in verse 8. Or this history may be from a different day of Brahmā.

Text 48.11

durārdhyaṁ samārādhya viṣṇuṁ sarveśvareśvaram
yo vṛṇīte mano-grāhyam asattvāt kumanīṣy asau

Kṛṣṇa, endowed with all qualities and powers, able to bestow all benedictions, is ordinarily difficult to approach. One who has properly worshiped him and then chooses the benediction of material enjoyment

is certainly of poor intelligence, for he is satisfied with an insignificant result.

COMMENTARY: After finishing the story of Kubjā, in order to dispel criticism because Kubjā appeared to be a materialistic woman, the Lord is praised. Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading, perfect Svayam Bhagavān (*viṣṇum*) and is the source of appearance for the *puruṣa avatāras* such as Mahā-viṣṇu (*sarveśvareśvaram*). Another version has *sarva-vareśam*, the person who can award all benedictions including liberation and *bhakti.* Therefore he is difficult to attain. In spite of this, if one worships him intensely (*sam-ārādhya*), and prays for objects pleasing to himself (*mano-grāhyam*), that person is of lowest intelligence, because of accepting most insignificant, temporary, useless objects (*asattvāt*). The intelligent person will pray for the Supreme Lord endowed with bliss that surpasses words and mind.

Since Kubjā did not have the same *prema* as the *gopīs*, and lacked a similar wealth of happiness, she is considered less than the *gopīs*, though her desire was fulfilled. She was less fortunate. Though she did attain direct association with the Lord, with the attainment of full *prema* as a result of her *bhakti*, she lacked their type of happiness because of difference in the *bhāva*, just as some persons, even seeing the Lord, do not experience full happiness. That is clear from the appearance of the misery of persons like the wrestlers in Kaṁsa's arena.

Text 48.12

akrūra-bhavanaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-rāmoddhavaḥ prabhuḥ
kiñcic cikīrṣayan prāgād akrūra-prīya-kāmyayā

Then Kṛṣṇa, wanting to have some things done, went to Akrūra's house with Balarāma and Uddhava. The Lord also desired to please Akrūra.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa went to Akrūra's house to fulfill Akrūra's desires, just as he had done with Kubjā. Because of this similarity, the two pastimes are narrated together. He went with Balarāma and Uddhava because he had previously promised (SB 10.41.17) to come along with Balarāma and because he should not do such activities independently, without Balarāma. Balarāma had also promised Yaśodā that he would accompany Kṛṣṇa

everywhere to protect him. He went with Uddhava since he was dependent on Uddhava's expert advice to comprehend certain affairs.

He fulfilled the previous request of Akrūra:

āgaccha yāma gehān naḥ sa-nāthān kurv adhokṣaja
sahāgrajaḥ sa-gopālaiḥ suhṛdbhiś ca suhṛttama

Come, let us go to my house with your elder brother, the cowherd men and your companions. O best of friends, O transcendental Lord, in this way please grace my house with its master. SB 10.41.12

Because the two were dear to him, Kṛṣṇa considered them equals. Thus he, with them, went to the house gloriously (*pra-agāt*). Akrūra had remained all this time in his house making various arrangements with devotion, in expectation of the Lord's coming. Since Akrūra did not directly witness the killing of Kaṁsa, he was eager to congratulate Kṛṣṇa now.

Texts 48.13–14

sa tān nara-vara-śreṣṭhān ārād vīkṣya sva-bāndhavān
pratyutthāya pramuditaḥ pariṣvajyābhinandya ca
nanāma kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca sa tair apy abhivāditaḥ
pūjayām āsa vidhi-vat kṛtāsana-parigrahān

Akrūra stood up in great joy when he saw them, his own relatives and the greatest of exalted personalities, coming from a distance. After embracing them and greeting them, Akrūra bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and was greeted by them in return. Then, when his guests had taken their seats, he worshiped them in accordance with scriptural rules.

COMMENTARY: He saw the best (*śreṣṭhān*) among the Yadus (*nara-vara*) or the worthiest of being worshipped (*vara-śreṣṭhān*) among men. This shows they were most worthy of worship. They were relatives. This shows they were an object of great affection. Because of this, seeing them from afar, he was overjoyed. He welcomed them with kind words.

He offered respects to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma because they were the Supreme Lords. He did not offer respects to Uddhava since he was the son of his brother. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first because he is Svayam Bhagavān. As was suitable, he offered with faith the best seats, foot water and *arghya.*

Texts 48.15–16

pādāvanejanīr āpo dhārayan śirasā nṛpa
arhaṇenāmbarair divyair gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ
arcitvā śirasānamya pādāv aṅka-gatau mṛjan
praśrayāvanato 'krūraḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmāv abhāṣata

O King, Akrūra bathed the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and then poured the water on his head. He presented them with gifts, fine clothing, aromatic sandalwood paste, flower garlands and excellent jewelry. After thus worshiping the two Lords, he bowed his head to the floor. He then began to massage Kṛṣṇa's feet and Balarāma's feet, placing them on his lap, and with his head bowed in humility he addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as follows.

COMMENTARY: He washed the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balaṛāma. O King! Śukadeva becomes overjoyed on seeing the good fortune of Akrūra. The worship according to the rules is described. He worshipped them with the ingredients of worship (*arhaṇena*) such as foot water. Some details are given. Or after feeding them, he again worshipped them. Washing their feet and putting the water on his head can be part of the first worship in the previous verse.

He lowered his head since he could not do complete *praṇāmas* while massaging their feet or he still had a desire to see their faces. He took both pairs of feet on his lap. Or because he had affection for his great devotee, Kṛṣṇa spread his feet for him to massage (*mṛjan*).

Text 48.17

diṣṭyā pāpo hataḥ kaṁsaḥ sānugo vām idaṁ kulam
bhavadbhyām uddhṛtaṁ kṛcchrād durantāc ca samedhitam

[Akrūra said:] It is our good fortune that you two have killed the evil Kaṁsa and his followers, thus delivering your dynasty from endless suffering and causing it to flourish.

COMMENTARY: The extremely wicked Kaṁsa has been killed. By his killing, the Yadu family of yours (*vām*) has been delivered and made prosperous with various types of wealth. That is a proper action for your family.

Text 48.18

yuvāṁ pradhāna-puruṣau jagad-dhetū jagan-mayau
bhavadbhyāṁ na vinā kiñcit param asti na cāparam

You both are the original Supreme Person, the cause of the universe and its very substance. Not the slightest subtle cause or manifest product of creation exists apart from you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

What to speak of protecting this kingdom! The whole universe belongs to you. Though there is one Supreme Lord, because he has manifested as two, the verse is in the dual. You are the main *puruṣas* with the internal and external energies. You are the *upādāna* and *nimitta* causes of the universe. You are situated as one with the universe by your two expansions—*prakṛti* and *jīva.*

āsīj jñānam atho artha ekam evāvikalpitam
yadā viveka-nipuṇā ādau kṛta-yuge 'yuge

Originally, during Satya-yuga, when all men were expert in spiritual discrimination, and also during the period of annihilation, the Lord was complete, one alone, without difference.

tan māyā-phala-rūpeṇa kevalaṁ nirvikalpitam
vāṅ-mano-'gocaraṁ satyaṁ dvidhā samabhavad bṛhat

That one entity, remaining free from material dualities, divided himself into two categories—*prakṛti* and *jīva,* which are beyond words and mind and which are real. SB 11.24.2-3

Apart from you, nothing exists either as cause or effect. The universe is delivered and made prosperous by you.

Text 48.19

ātma-sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvam anvāviśya sva-śaktibhiḥ
īyate bahudhā brahman śruta-pratyakṣa-gocaram

O Supreme Absolute Truth, with your personal energies you create this universe and then enter into it. Thus one can perceive you in many different forms being understood from scripture and direct experience.

COMMENTARY: Having established the non-difference of the Lords from the effect known as the universe by saying nothing exists except them, Akrūra now establishes that they pervade the universe as *antaryāmī.* You are perceived as many forms (*bahudhā*), which can be perceived by scripture and senses. *Śruta-pratyakṣa-gocaram* is used as a modifying phrase, and does not drop its neuter gender.

Text 48.20

yathā hi bhūteṣu carācareṣu mahy-ādayo yoniṣu bhānti nānā
evaṁ bhavān kevala ātma-yoniṣv ātmātma-tantro bahudhā vibhāti

Just as the primary elements—earth and so on—manifest themselves in abundant variety among all the species of mobile and immobile life, so you, the pure one, independent, appear to be manifold among the variegated objects of your creation.

COMMENTARY: Though you are one, you appear to be variegated. Though you are within, you are also external. An example is given to clarify this. Exactly as (*yatha hi*) *mahat-tattva,* etc., existing outside as the cause is also within all beings; you, though the one cause, the giver of consciousness to everything, and independent, being the externally existing Supreme Lord, appear as many in all beings as the *antaryāmī*. They become active because of you, the *antaryāmī.* How can there be any fault? All are delivered and made prosperous.

Text 48.21

sṛjasy atho lumpasi pāsi viśvaṁ
rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇaiḥ sva-śaktibhiḥ
na badhyase tad-guṇa-karmabhir vā
jñānātmanas te kva ca bandha-hetuḥ

You create, destroy and also maintain this universe with your personal energies—the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness—yet you are never entangled by these modes or the activities they generate. Since you are the original source of all knowledge, what could ever cause you to be bound by illusion?

COMMENTARY: The faults and qualities of the *jīvas* are not yours, since you are only the *antaryāmī.* Protecting (*pāsi*) is placed last since the Lord mainly protects. The faults and qualities of creation, destruction and maintenance and their *guṇas* of *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* do not apply to you. Since you simply inspire as the *antaryāmī*, the faults and qualities belong to the *jīva*.

You are not bound by the actions with qualities of passion, ignorance or peace, which affect the *jīva*, since you are *antaryāmī*. The reason is given. They are your *śaktis.* Being the agent, you are not contaminated by the faults or qualities of matter. They are the *śaktis* of you, the Supreme Lord. What more can be said? You are not bound up. Even your associates are not bound. Where is the cause of bondage even (*ca*) for he who is aware of your glories (*jñānātmanaḥ*)?

Text 48.22

dehādy-upādher anirūpitatvād
bhavo na sākṣān na bhidātmanaḥ syāt
ato na bandhas tava naiva mokṣaḥ
syātām nikāmas tvayi no 'vivekaḥ

Since it has never been demonstrated that you are covered by material, bodily designations, it must be concluded that for you there is neither birth in a literal sense nor any duality. Therefore you never undergo bondage or liberation, and if you appear to, it is only because of your desire that we see you in that way, or simply because of our lack of discrimination.

COMMENTARY: What can be said? Because you have knowledge, there is no cause of bondage for your mind. That is explained in this verse. Because of the falsity (*anirūpititvāt*) of the body Even all *jīvas* are not bound up (if they have this knowledge). You are not bound or even liberated by actions. If bondage and liberation occurred, it is the desire at all times (*nikāmaḥ*) of us devotees. You are bound or freed by the desire of the devotees.

"Why would devotees desire this?" There is no sense of judgment for this (*vivekaḥ)*. This bondage occurs by your actions like stealing butter. Giving

up the rules of dharma for your devotees, you act in this manner. There is a loss of judgment because of special *rasa*.

Text 48.23

tvayodito 'yaṁ jagato hitāya
yadā yadā veda-pathaḥ purāṇaḥ
bādhyeta pāṣaṇḍa-pathair asadbhis
tadā bhavān sattva-guṇaṁ bibharti

You enunciated the eternal Vedas for the benefit of the whole universe. Whenever that path becomes obstructed by wicked persons following the path of atheism, you nourish sattva-guṇa.

COMMENTARY: You appear because of our desires, and to benefit the world you protect the path of the Vedas.

It arises from you and necessarily should be protected by you as proof. It is not manufactured. It is without beginning (*purāṇah*). Since you are without beginning, the scriptures are without beginning. Or because of you, the Vedas manifest in this world, since they are not written by any human. When the path is obstructed by materialistic persons (*asadbhiḥ*), who oppose you, you nourish *sattva-guṇa*. When those in ignorance destroy the correct path and become powerful in time, you personally, appearing in the world, nourish those in *sattva*.

Text 48.24

sa tvam prabho 'dya vasudeva-gṛhe 'vatīrṇaḥ
svāṁśena bhāram apanetum ihāsi bhūmeḥ
akṣauhiṇī-śata-vadhena suretarāṁśa-
rājñām amuṣya ca kulasya yaśo vitanvan

You are that very same Supreme Person, my Lord, and you have now appeared in the home of Vasudeva with your plenary portion. You have done this to relieve the earth's burden by killing hundreds of armies led by kings who are expansions of the *devatās'* enemies, and also to spread the fame of our dynasty.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After this introduction, Akrūra returns to the present situation as mentioned in verse 17. Being of such greatness, again and again you appear in this world to establish the proper path. O Lord full of all powers (*prabho*)! You appeared in the house of the best Yadu, Vasudeva. Vasudeva can also mean "one who shines (*deva*) with a wealth (*vasu*) of *bhakti."*

Text 48.25

adyeśa no vasatayaḥ khalu bhūri-bhāgā
yaḥ sarva-deva-pitṛ-bhūta-nṛ-deva-mūrtiḥ
yat-pāda-śauca-salilaṁ tri-jagat punāti
sa tvaṁ jagad-gurur adhokṣaja yāḥ praviṣṭaḥ

Today, O Lord, my home has become most fortunate because you have entered it. As the Supreme Truth, you embody the forefathers, ordinary creatures, human beings and devatās, and the water that has washed your feet purifies the three worlds. O omniscient Lord, you are supreme among all universes.

COMMENTARY: I am constantly receiving your mercy. O lord of the universe, most rare (*iśa*)! You embody all the *devatās.* You are the conclusion of all debts to them. You are all sacred places for all who live in this world. You are the guru of the universe. This means you are Nārāyaṇa. You rule Vaikuṇṭha. You came back to life under the axel of the cart (*adhokṣaja*). You live in Gokula.

Text 48.26

kaḥ paṇḍitas tvad aparaṁ śaraṇaṁ samīyād
bhakta-priyād ṛta-giraḥ suhṛdaḥ kṛta-jñāt
sarvān dadāti suhṛdo bhajato 'bhikāmān
ātmānam apy upacayāpacayau na yasya

What learned person would approach anyone but you for shelter, when you are the affectionate, grateful and truthful well-wisher of your devotees? To those who worship you in sincere friendship you reward everything they desire, even your own self, yet you never increase or diminish.

COMMENTARY: Who would surrender (*īyāt*) to *devatās* or other rulers at some time or by some means (*sam*)? The long *ī* is poetic license. The real intelligent persons should surrender to you only, since you have great qualities. The reasons for surrender are given. You are affectionate to the devotees. You speak true words such as "I am the shelter for those in pain." You are thus affectionate to the miserable. You are the friend, giving unqualified mercy. You supply what is lacking or your heart is splendid though a person offends you (*suhṛdaḥ*). Thus, you do not recognize offenses. You know yourself and others (*kṛt-jñāt*). You always examine everything to benefit all people.

The list of terms is in order of increasing excellence for surrendering.

"I will come to your house." (SB 10.41.17) By coming he should prove that his words were true. He did not consider Akrūra's conduct with the *gopīs* to be offensive. He also knew Akrūra had built his house for him. You give everything to a person dear to you (*suhṛdaḥ*) because he worships you, or even if he does not worship you (*abhajataḥ*), since he is your friend. You are affectionate to friends. You give whatever is desired, even yourself. You are under his control. This is because you have an unconditional friendship. There is no gain from worship or loss from not worshipping you from your perspective. Even though there is a gain for the Lord by attaining the happiness of *bhakti* for the devotees, this statement (no gain for the Lord) is made out of humility and politeness. For you, the Lord, there is no gain in not giving to those who desire something, and there is no loss in giving yourself since you have inconceivable powers. Or there is no increase in not giving yourself, since you already are most complete, and there is no decrease when you give, because you are always without change. You give yourself completely.

Text 48.27

diṣṭyā janārdana bhavān iha naḥ pratīto
yogeśvarair api durāpa-gatiḥ sureśaiḥ
chindhy āśu naḥ suta-kalatra-dhanāpta-geha-
dehādi-moha-raśanāṁ bhavadīya-māyām

It is by our great fortune, Janārdana, that you are now visible to us, for even the masters of yoga and the foremost devatās can achieve this goal

only with great difficulty. Please quickly cut the ropes of our illusory attachment for children, wife, wealth, friends, home and body. All such attachment is simply the effect of your illusory material energy.

COMMENTARY: I have attained what cannot be obtained. Now, have special mercy on me, with a wealth of *bhakti*. O Lord you are requested (*ardana*) by the *devatās* like Brahmā (*jana*) to be visible to them. You are very rare. You are rarely seen directly in the heart by masters of *samādhi* like the Kumāras (*yogeśvaraiḥ*) and those who teach the Kumāras, persons like Brahmā (*sureśvaraiḥ*). Or you are rarely attained by the greatest of *bhakti-yogīs*, who are the greatest *devatās*. Identifying themselves as *devatās* is an obstacle to seeing you.

However, you are visible in my house because of your mercy. Or that you have appeared in my house is just good luck (*diṣṭyā*). It is our great fortune. Plural *(naḥ*) is used to indicate respect for the self or to indicate his family members. Please quickly cut the ropes of illusion concerning sons, etc. They are called ropes because they are binding and hard to escape. You can do this easily since it is your *māyā*. *Āpta* refers to friends and *ādi* refers to *dharma,* etc.

Text 48.28

ity arcitaḥ saṁstutaś ca bhaktena bhagavān hariḥ
akrūraṁ sa-smitaṁ prāha gīrbhiḥ sammohayann iva

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus worshiped and fully glorified by his devotee, Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers and attractive with pastimes, smilingly addressed Akrūra, completely bewildering him with his words.

COMMENTARY: Akrūra's devotion (*bhaktena*) was indicated by his worship and his praises. The Lord was pleased with this. Therefore he smiled, and spoke with affection and sincerity (*prāha*), since he was full of all qualities (*bhagavān*), because he was all attractive (*hariḥ*). He bewildered Akrūra by his words alone, not in terms of truth. Akrūra could not determine the true meaning of the words and he did not expect the Lord to speak directly to him. *Iva* indicates that because the Lord had good conduct, bewildering words were not expected. Or by his sweet words, the Lord produced great

possessiveness for himself in Akrūra. *Iva* indicates that Akrūra naturally had possessiveness for the Lord.

Text 48.29

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tvaṁ no guruḥ pitṛvyaś ca ślāghyo bandhuś ca nityadā
vayaṁ tu rakṣyāḥ poṣyāś ca anukampyāḥ prajā hi vaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: You are our praiseworthy teacher, praiseworthy paternal uncle and praiseworthy friend, and we are like your sons, always dependent on your protection, sustenance and compassion.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You are our guru. Kṛṣṇa uses the plural to indicate himself and Balarāma in order to show his status as an ordinary person. Akrūra was a guru because he gave instructions. He was a friend because he did beneficial acts for them. He was praiseworthy because of being the greatest teacher, greatest uncle, and greatest friend. We were always protected by you from dangers, nourished by you with food, and were always the objects of your compassion by giving instructions because (*hi*) we were your sons.

Text 48.30

bhavad-vidhā mahā-bhāgā niṣevyā arha-sattamāḥ
śreyas-kāmair nṛbhir nityaṁ devāḥ svārthā na sādhavaḥ

Exalted souls like you are the true objects of service and the most worshipable authorities for those who desire the highest good in life. Devatās are generally concerned with their own interests, but saintly devotees never are.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because of your exalted qualities we should serve you. People similar to you are fortunate to have attained the status of the greatest devotees (*mahā-bhāgāḥ*), what to speak of you directly having good fortune. Persons like you are even greater that the *devatās.* You should always be served with the greatest devotion (*ni-sevyā)* by men. You are most worthy

of service (*arha-sattamāḥ*). Some versions have *arhattamaḥ*. All men should serve devotee like you because such service is the best means of advancement. And since among men you are a Yadu and my uncle, serving you is the highest means of advancement. The plural is used (*śreyas-kāmaiḥ*) to indicate the goals of liberation and *bhakti.* Other than the Lord and his devotees, others such as *devatās* do not have such power. Besides giving meager results, there is another fault in the *devatās.* They have their self-interest. By being indifferent to becoming a *devatā,* persons like you are much greater than *devatās.* The qualities of the devotees are as follows.

titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ

Such devotees are tolerant, merciful, friendly to all beings, without enemies, gentle, straightforward and respectful to other devotees.

mayy ananyena bhāvena bhaktiṁ kurvanti ye dṛḍhām
mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ

They perform steady *bhakti* to me with exclusive devotion, giving up all actions to attain me, giving up friends and relatives.

mad-āśrayāḥ kathā mṛṣṭāḥ śṛṇvanti kathayanti ca
tapanti vividhās tāpā naitān mad-gata-cetasaḥ

Taking shelter of me, they recite and listen to pure stories. They are not afflicted by material miseries, and thus fully absorb their minds in me.

ta ete sādhavaḥ sādhvi sarva-saṅga-vivarjitāḥ
saṅgas teṣv atha te prārthyaḥ saṅga-doṣa-harā hi te

Those devotees are devoid of attachment to *artha, dharma, kāma* and *mokṣa.* You should desire their association. They destroy the faults of material association. SB 3.25.21-24

Text 48.31

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ
te punanty uru-kālena darśanād eva sādhavaḥ

No one can deny that there are holy places with sacred rivers, or that the devatās appear in deity forms made of earth and stone. But these purify

the soul only after a long time, whereas saintly persons purify just by being seen.

COMMENTARY: "Should the *devatās* not be worshipped?" The meaning is this. The deity forms made of stone are worshippable, what then to speak of the shining forms made with excellence. But in truth, the devotees should be served more because the holy places purify the heart of sinful contaminations only after serving a long time.

To serve devotees directly is not the same as serving ordinary *devatās* directly, though even that is rare. Serving deity forms of the *devatās* is even less valuable than serving them directly. And serving ordinary *tīrthas* is similar. The deity forms of the *devatās* and the deities of the *tīrthas* purify a person of impurities of the heart only after a long time. Use of the masculine (*te*) instead of the neuter form (*tāni*) is poetic license. The first moment, not even the second moment, of seeing devotees purifies one immediately.

Text 48.32

sa bhavān suhṛdāṁ vai naḥ śreyān śreyaś-cikīrṣayā
jijñāsārthaṁ pāṇḍavānāṁ gacchasva tvaṁ gajāhvayam

You are the best of us Yadus and our relatives, so please go to Hastināpura and, as the well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas, find out how they are doing.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Now what Kṛṣṇa wanted to say is spoken. The word *sa* indicates Akrūra's greatness as a devotee. Among us Yadus (*naḥ*) and among our relatives (*suhṛdām*), you are famous (*vai*) as the best. Ask how the Pāṇḍavas are faring under the shelter of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Go for that purpose.

Text 48.33

pitary uparate bālāḥ saha mātrā su-duḥkhitāḥ
ānītāḥ sva-puraṁ rājñā vasanta iti śuśruma

We have heard that when their father passed away, the young Pāṇḍavas were brought with their anguished mother to the capital city by King

Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and that they are now living there.

COMMENTARY: What should be found out as well as the reason is given in three verses (33-35). *Uparate* is a polite way of saying that the father died, and that they lamented this. When the younger brother died, Dhṛtarāṣṭra came. The word king suggests that Dhṛtarāṣṭra was proud of his position and mad. Kṛṣṇa uses the word *śuśruma* (we have heard) to increase the affection for the Pāṇḍavas, and to hide his own powers. The word *nūnam* in the next verse also suggests this.

Text 48.34

teṣu rājāmbikā-putro bhrātṛ-putreṣu dīna-dhīḥ
samo na vartate nūnaṁ duṣputra-vaśa-go 'ndha-dṛk

It seems that weak-minded Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, has come under the control of his wicked sons, and therefore that blind King is not treating his brother's sons fairly.

COMMENTARY: Because he was a half-brother (*ambikā-putraḥ*), he mistreated his brother's sons. *Nunam* indicates conjecture. He did not treat his brother's sons fairly. He treated them wrongly. Or he did not treat them like he treated his own sons, since his intelligence was meagre or he was wicked minded (*andha-dhīḥ*), since he was controlled by his evil son. He was blind from birth. This indicates he was unqualified to be a king.

Text 48.35

gaccha jānīhi tad-vṛttam adhunā sādhv asādhu vā
vijñāya tad vidhāsyāmo yathā śaṁ suhṛdāṁ bhavet

Go and see whether Dhṛtarāṣṭra is acting properly or not. When we find out, we will make the necessary arrangements to help our dear friends.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Go now and find out if the kings' actions are good or bad.

Text 48.36

ity akrūraṁ samādiśya bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
saṅkarṣaṇoddhavābhyāṁ vai tataḥ sva-bhavanaṁ yayau

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus fully instructing Akrūra, the Supreme Lord then returned to his residence, accompanied by Saṅkarṣaṇa and Uddhava.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa instructed Akrūra completely (*samādiśya*), giving great mercy, since he was most merciful (*bhagavān*). He was also being merciful to the Pāṇḍavas.

Chapter Forty-nine
Akrūra's Mission in Hastināpura

Texts 49.1–2

śrī-śuka uvāca
sa gatvā hāstinapuraṁ pauravendra-yaśo-'ṅkitam
dadarśa tatrāmbikeyaṁ sa-bhīṣmaṁ viduraṁ pṛthām
saha-putraṁ ca bāhlīkaṁ bhāradvājaṁ sa-gautamam
karnaṁ suyodhanaṁ drauṇiṁ pāṇḍavān suhṛdo 'parān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Akrūra went to Hastināpura, the city distinguished by the glory of the Paurava rulers. There he saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Vidura and Kuntī, along with Bāhlika and his son Somadatta. He also saw Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, Karṇa, Duryodhana, Aśvatthāmā, the Pāṇḍavas and other close friends.

COMMENTARY: Two verses are connected. Akṛūra, whose good qualities have been mentioned (*saḥ*), going to Hastinapura, saw there in the assembly (*tatra*) Dhṛtarāṣṭra and others. They are all mentioned together because he saw them at the same time. Bhīṣma is mentioned with him because he was near Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was sitting on the throne, in order to get his approval on all matters. Bhīṣma was on his right and Vidura was on his left as a minister. Others were seated around. Or Bhīṣma was with Vidura. The two were seated together because of affection for each other, having similar proper conduct. Because Kuntī (*pṛthām*) was seated near them, she is mentioned after the two.

The word *ca* means others. Bāhlika was with his son. The second *ca* (instead of *sa-gautamam*) means *api*. Though Droṇa (*bhāradvājam*) was a *brāhmaṇa* he sat among them. The other version with *ca* indicates that the Droṇa sat with Kṛpācārya. The list is from the king's showing greater to lesser respect. Thus Bāhlika was respected by the king more than Droṇa, because he increased the clan. His son is mentioned with him because he was by his side. Or Bāhlika was respected as a grandfather. Karṇa is mentioned with Duryodhana because they were friends. The others are clear. The Pāṇḍavas are mentioned last, being situated far away, and not being respected. "Others" indicates Śakuni, Duḥṣāsana and others.

Text 49.3

yathāvad upasaṅgamya bandhubhir gāndinī-sutaḥ
sampṛṣṭas taiḥ suhṛd-vārtāṁ svayaṁ cāpṛcchad avyayam

After Akrūra, the son of Gāndinī, had appropriately greeted all his relatives and friends, they asked him for news of their family members, and he in turn asked about their welfare.

COMMENTARY: Calling him Gāndinī-suta suggests that he knew *dharma*. Thus he respected the elders by obeisances, equals by embraces and inferiors by giving blessings (*yathāvat upasaṁgamya*). He met all with affection. They asked about the Yadus (*suhṛd-vārtām*) with affection and according to rules in welcoming guests.

Text 49.4

uvāsa katicin māsān rājño vṛtta-vivitsayā
duṣprajasyālpa-sārasya khala-cchandānuvartinaḥ

He remained in Hastināpura for several months to scrutinize the conduct of the weak-willed King, who had bad sons and who was inclined to give in to the whims of mischievous advisers.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes the unjust acts of the king. He stayed for several months, since it took some time to learn the nature of the evil king. The sequence of adjectives is in order of cause and effect. The conclusion was that he was evil.

Texts 49.5–6

teja ojo balaṁ vīryaṁ praśrayādīṁś ca sad-guṇān
prajānurāgaṁ pārtheṣu na sahadbhiś cikīṛṣitam
kṛtaṁ ca dhārtarāṣṭrair yad gara-dānādy apeśalam
ācakhyau sarvam evāsmai pṛthā vidura eva ca

Kuntī and Vidura described to Akrūra in detail the evil intentions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, who could not tolerate the great qualities of Kuntī's sons—such as their powerful influence, military skill, physical strength, bravery and humility—or the intense affection the citizens had for them. Kuntī and Vidura also told Akrūra about how the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had tried to poison the Pāṇḍavas and carry out other such plots.

COMMENTARY: The word *ādīn* (etc.) means other qualities such as shyness and determination. The sons could not tolerate their excellent qualities (*sad-gunān*). The list starts with those qualities which the sons could not tolerate the most. *Dānādi* means giving poison and the methods of doing it, or the various bad advice given to kill them. They told this to Akrūra, even though he was impartial, having relationships with both parties. Even (*api*) Vidura confirmed what Kuntī said. The word *ca* indicates that even the servants of Droṇa or the family priests said the same thing.

Text 49.7

pṛthā tu bhrātaraṁ prāptam akrūram upasṛtya tam
uvāca janma-nilayaṁ smaranty aśru-kalekṣaṇā

Kuntīdevī approached him confidentially when he came to her house. While remembering her birthplace, she spoke with tears flowing from her eyes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Akrūra considered the words of Kuntī important because of her great devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The word *tu* indicates she spoke other information. She approached him when he came to her house because he was famous as the Lord's devotee. Her eyes flowed constantly with tears (*aśru-kalekṣaṇā*).

Text 49.8

api smaranti naḥ saumya pitarau bhrātaraś ca me
bhaginyau bhrātṛ-putrāś ca jāmayaḥ sakhya eva ca

[Queen Kuntī said:] O gentle one, do my parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, family women and others with similar character still remember us?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Do they remember us (*naḥ*)—me and the children. O Akrūra with a peaceful nature (*saumya*) because of good conduct and affection for friends! Do Śūrasena and his wives remember us? Do the female relatives like Devakī and others with similar character (*sakhyah*) remember us?

Text 49.9

bhrātreyo bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ
paitṛ-ṣvasreyān smarati rāmaś cāmburuhekṣaṇaḥ

Does my nephew lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and the compassionate shelter of his devotees, still remember his aunt's sons? And does Balarāma remember them also?

COMMENTARY: She then asks more particularly. The Lord is endowed with unlimited qualities like mercy (*bhagavān*), protects those who are surrendered (*śaraṇyaḥ*) and particularly is affection to the devotees because he has appeared in this world to manifest his unlimited powers as Svayam Bhagavān (*kṛṣṇaḥ*). The descriptive terms are in order of increasing excellence for remembering him. His aunt's sons are particularly to be remembered because of great affection for them. With his lotus eyes, he is most beautiful, destroying all suffering just by seeing him. She desires to see him directly. The descriptive terms apply to Balarāma as well. Balarāma is mentioned after, since he plays a secondary role.

Text 49.10

sapatna-madhye śocantīṁ vṛkānāṁ hariṇīm iva
sāntvayiṣyati māṁ vākyaiḥ pitṛ-hīnāṁś ca bālakān

Now that I am suffering in the midst of my enemies like a doe in the midst of wolves, will Kṛṣṇa come to console me and my fatherless sons with his words?

COMMENTARY: "Because he remembers you, he has sent me here." But will he appear personally and give mercy soon? Calling him lotus eyed in the previous verse, she indicates her devotion to him. She then describes her miserable position among enemies, out of longing for him. Will he console me with his affectionate words? Will I drink directly the nectar of his playful words, with a sweet, deep voice, with a special expression on his face, while glancing with a smile? Or will he console me with some words and proper treatment? The children are without shelter and miserable, being without a father. The suffix *ka* indicates smallness and inability to do anything. She and the Pāṇḍavas are worthy objects of consolation since they are without shelter and miserable.

Text 49.11

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin viśvātman viśva-bhāvana
prapannāṁ pāhi govinda śiśubhiś cāvasīdatīm

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! O great yogī! O Supreme Soul and protector of the universe! O Govinda! Please protect me, who have surrendered to you. I and my sons are being overwhelmed by trouble.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"After solving problems among his own people, he will come and console you." Until the time we see his sweetness, he should protect our lives while we are here. Indicating his supreme abilities, she calls out to him directly in great pain in three verses (11-13), speaking pitifully. She prays for protection from dangers in the future. First, she calls his primary name Kṛṣṇa twice, so that he will quickly turn towards her. She indicates his ability by calling out to him. O Kṛṣṇa endowed with the highest means (*mahā-yogī*)! It is not necessary to inform you since you are the source of all knowledge (*viśvātman*). In knowing everything you are not indifferent, since you protect the universe (*viśva-bhāvana*). You are affectionate to those who surrender. O Govinda! You gained that name after lifting Govardhana. Do not delay in coming. I am suffering constantly with my children because of the troubles caused by enemies.

Text 49.12

nānyat tava padāmbhojāt paśyāmi śaraṇaṁ nṛṇām
bibhyatāṁ mṛtyu-saṁsārād īsvarasyāpavargikāt

For persons fearful of death and rebirth, I see no shelter other than your lotus feet, which award liberation, for you are the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: "Pray for something else for gaining protection. Perform *sat-karmas*, etc." To reject such a proposal, this verse states that the Lord gives protection not just from enemies, but even from *saṁsāra*. Everyone should surrender to the Lord. I do not see other methods like *sat-karmas* (*na anyat*). Mention of "I" expresses the necessity of preserving her qualification for surrender to the Lord. By performing renunciation or other methods, generally mankind (*nṛnām*) becomes fearful.

Or for all *jīvas* (*nṛnām*) who are fearful of death, there is no other way except surrender to your lotus feet. Death indicates all of *saṁsāra*, including birth, but because death is the most painful, it is mentioned in place of *saṁsāra*. Or men fear punishment at death (*mṛtyu*), what to speak of repeated death (*saṁsārāt*).

Not seeing anyone with the proper power, she gives the reason for her choice. You are the Lord (*īśvarasya*) and therefore your feet are beyond the material world (*apavargikāt*). Or those feet give freedom from difficulties like killing a *brāhmaṇa* (*apavargikā*t), even for Śiva (*īśvarasya*).

Text 49.13

namaḥ kṛṣṇāya śuddhāya brahmaṇe paramātmane
yogeśvarāya yogāya tvām ahaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatā

I offer my obeisances unto you, Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of dharma, Brahman, Paramātmā, complete in all aspects and the source of all knowledge. I have come to you for shelter.

COMMENTARY: Describing Kṛṣṇa clearly as the Supreme Lord with zeal, she offers obeisances with devotion and surrenders to him with great humility. By mentioning Kṛṣṇa, she indicates his power. By mentioning purity, etc., she further makes his power clear. Or since he is pure, following *dharma* he will protect those who are surrendered. Since he is Brahman and Paramātmā, he should always, in all circumstances, protect everyone. Thus he is the lord of yoga and is perfect in all ways. He is not dependent on knowledge from others (*yogāya*). The list of items is in order of increasing excellence as reasons for surrender.

Or she surrenders in great pain and describes his glories, first offering respects. He is directly the Supreme Lord, manifesting unlimited powers (*kṛṣṇāya*). He is devoid of all faults or devoid of *māyā* (*śuddhāya*). He is all pervading (*brahmaṇe*), and present in all hearts as the *antaryāmī* (*paramātmane*). Moreover, he is the cause of *bhakti-yoga* (*yogeśvarāya*). Therefore, he meets with his devotees in *prema* (*yogāya)*. Thus, as a miserable entity, I surrender to him alone. Out of great devotion, giving up the correct order, she addresses him indirectly as Kṛṣṇa, and only later as

"you." This illustrates her humility. Or after *namaḥ* the word *tubhyam* (unto you) can be understood.

Having explained her relationship, she offers respects and surrenders. You are the embodiment of *dharma* (*śuddhāya*). Therefore you must protect those who have surrendered. Because you are Brahman and Paramātmā, you should protect everyone at all times in all places. You can protect everyone because you are full of all aspects (*yogeśvarāya*). You do not depend on anyone else for knowledge (*yogāya*).

Or, you are Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers of all types of *bhakti.* You are the form of consciousness alone for the impersonal *jñānīs* and you are *antaryāmī* alone for those attracted to your powers. All these forms are free of the touch of *māyā* (*śuddhāya*). You give methods of realizing your forms which appear here and there in the world (*yogeśvarāya*). You are both *śakti* and *śaktimān* (*yogāya*). Thus nothing is impossible for you. Therefore I surrender to you.

Text 49.14

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity anusmṛtya sva-janaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ ca jagad-īśvaram
prārudad duḥkhitā rājan bhavatāṁ prapitāmahī

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus meditating on her family members and also on Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe, your great-grandmother Kuntīdevī began to cry out in grief, O King.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Repeatedly remembering (*anusmṛtya)* her parents and others (*svajanam*) and Kṛṣṇa as the Lord of the universe, or remembering Kṛṣṇa who was her relative (*sva-janam*) as Lord of the universe, or remembering Kṛṣṇa, though he was Lord of the universe, as her relative (*sva-janam*), she became sad because she could not attain him, and then cried with a choked voice (*pra--arudat).* She was your great grandmother. She had such affection for Kṛṣṇa. You are fortunate to be her great grandson. Śukadeva says this to increase Parīkṣit's bliss. He uses the word *bhavatām* (your) in the plural out of great respect. In joy he calls out "O King!"

Text 49.15

sama-duḥkha-sukho 'krūro viduraś ca mahā-yaśāḥ
sāntvayām āsatuḥ kuntīṁ tat-putrotpatti-hetubhiḥ

Both Akrūra, who shared Queen Kuntī's distress and happiness, and the illustrious Vidura consoled the Queen by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons had taken birth.

COMMENTARY: Sharing her happiness and distress, Akrūra was most affectionate to Kuntī. Vidura by nature favored the Pāṇḍavas. Thus he is called greatly famous (*mahā-yaśāḥ*). Thus they both consoled her. Or both shared her happiness and distress but were famous for qualities like self-control. Thus, though the two should have wept with her, they controlled themselves. Or having all knowledge (*mahā-yaśāḥ*), they knew about the birth of her sons. Since the sons were born from the best *devatās,* no calamity could befall them. Soon they would have great fortune. What is the use of these talks? Or the cause of their birth was to help Kṛṣṇa relieve the burden of the earth and spread *bhakti*.

Text 49.16

yāsyan rājānam abhyetya viṣamaṁ putra-lālasam
avadat suhṛdāṁ madhye bandhubhiḥ sauhṛdoditam

The ardent affection King Dhṛtarāṣṭra felt for his sons had made him act unjustly toward the Pāṇḍavas. Just before leaving, Akrūra approached the King, who was seated among his friends, and related to him the message that his relatives—Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma—had sent out of friendship.

COMMENTARY: He approached the king, who, out of greed, had trespassed *dharma* and took someone else's kingdom. Thus the king acted unequally (*viṣamam*) to his sons and his brother's sons. Or his heart was filled with cruelty and deceit (*viṣamam*) because he had great affection for his evil sons headed by Duryodhana. Or he had a great desire that his sons enjoy the happiness of the kingdom. Akrūra spoke among friends like Bhīṣma. This indicates that such persons agreed with him, and there would be credibility in the words he would speak. Or by shaming the king, he hoped others would accept his words.

Text 49.17

akrūra uvāca
bho bho vaicitravīrya tvaṁ kurūṇāṁ kīrti-vardhana
bhrātary uparate pāṇḍāv adhunāsanam āsthitaḥ

Akrūra said: O my dear son of Vicitravīrya, O enhancer of the Kurus' glory, your brother Pāṇḍu having passed away, you have now assumed the royal throne.

COMMENTARY: He spoke with conciliation and sarcasm. He repeats the word *bho bho* to make the king attentively face him, since it was possible the king would resist, because Akrūra's words would not be sweet. By mentioning Vicitravīrya's name, he employs pacification, by suggesting he was the son of a great king. Since Pāṇḍu had died, there was no king to protect the citizens. For a long time since he died, you have been sitting on the throne (*adhunā*). This is proper. Or because you came from Vicitravīrya, you have great prowess, and unlawfully immediately took his kingdom. He calls him the great fame of the Kurus out of sarcasm. The meaning is "Because of you, the dynasty has become infamous." Or you divide up the fame of the Kurus. Since his father died, Yudhiṣṭhira is qualified for the throne. The younger brother should not take the kingdom.

Text 49.18

dharmeṇa pālayann urvīṁ prajāḥ śīlena rañjayan
vartamānaḥ samaḥ sveṣu śreyaḥ kīrtim avāpsyasi

By religiously protecting the earth, delighting your subjects with your noble character, and treating all your relatives equally, you will surely achieve success and glory.

COMMENTARY: If you please the citizens by your good character (*śīlena*) and are equal to your sons and the Pāṇḍavas (*sveṣu*) you will attain fame and prosperity (*śreyaḥ*). Or you will attain with purity (*avāpsyasi*) happiness (*śreyaḥ*) and fame in this world and the next.

Text 49.19

anyathā tv ācaraḹ loke garhito yāsyase tamaḥ
tasmāt samatve vartasva pāṇḍaveṣv ātmajeṣu ca

If you act otherwise, however, people will condemn you in this world, and you will suffer greatly in this life and in the next life you will enter the darkness of hell. Remain equally disposed, therefore, toward Pāṇḍu's sons and your own.

COMMENTARY: If you do actions contrary to what I have said (*anyathā*), you will gain infamy and great suffering (*tamas*)—separation from your sons in this life, and hell in the next life. By being equal (*samatve*) to your sons and the Pāṇḍavas, there will not criticism from the public and there will be benefit.

Text 49.20

neha cātyanta-saṁvāsaḥ kasyacit kenacit saha
rājan svenāpi dehena kim u jāyātmajādibhiḥ

In this world no one has any permanent relationship with anyone else, O King. We cannot stay forever even with our own body, what to speak of our wife, children and the rest.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In this life (*iha*) and the next (*ca*), no one has permanent relationships with anyone. Another version has *karhicit* or *kadācit* instead of *kasyacit.* O king! Though you are a king, you cannot avoid this fact. This can be perceived in our bodies, what to speak of others. Since the relationship with sons is impermanent, you should not be attached to them. Thus you should treat your sons and the Pāṇḍavas equally to maintain dharma.

Text 49.21

ekaḥ prasūyate jantur eka eva pralīyate
eko 'nubhuṅkte sukṛtam eka eva ca duṣkṛtam

Every creature is born alone and dies alone, and alone one experiences the just rewards of his good and evil deeds.

COMMENTARY: One is born alone and dies alone. Instead of *pralīyate* sometimes *pramīyate* (is destroyed) is seen.

Living beings are born without free choice of their bodies. They must experience in that particular body. One enjoys or suffers after death (*anu*) as previously mentioned (*ca*). After enjoying with sons in one life, in the next one must suffer and enjoy all alone.

Text 49.22

adharmopacitaṁ vittaṁ haranty anye 'lpa-medhasaḥ
sambhojanīyāpadeśair jalānīva jalaukasaḥ

In the guise of dear dependents, strangers steal the sinfully acquired wealth of a foolish man, just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water that sustains the fish.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Others such as sons steal the wealth one has personally earned with labor by forbidden actions or not following one's *sva-dharma* because, though one knows they are stealing, one has no ability to decide what to do. In a temporary body of water. the small fish makes the water dirty and foul smelling and smaller in quantity because of over-crowding. Thus the big fish dies first.

Text 49.23

puṣṇāti yān adharmeṇa sva-buddhyā tam apaṇḍitam
te 'kṛtārthaṁ prahiṇvanti prāṇā rāyaḥ sutādayaḥ

A fool indulges in sin to maintain his life, wealth and children and other relatives, for he thinks, "These things are mine." In the end, however, these very things all abandon him, leaving him frustrated.

COMMENTARY: In order to maintain his life, he does not follow the rules and prohibitions. Therefore he is a fool. Life, wealth and relatives, as well as friends and servants (*ādayaḥ*) reject him. The list is in order of increasing importance of non-rejection. Life rejects him when he dies. Though living, wealth and conscious beings like children leave him. They give him up without regard for *dharma*.

Text 49.24

svayaṁ kilbiṣam ādāya tais tyakto nārtha-kovidaḥ
asiddhārtho viśaty andhaṁ sva-dharma-vimukhas tamaḥ

Abandoned by his so-called dependents, ignorant of the actual goal of life, indifferent to sva-dharma, and having failed to fulfill his purposes, the foolish soul enters the blindness of hell, taking his sinful reactions with him.

COMMENTARY: He takes with him sins committed in order to maintain sons, by receiving another body suitable to his sin. He enters great hell (*andham*) and suffers a long time, since he was opposed to his dharma, being ignorant of the highest goal (*nārtha-kovidaḥ*), or because he was expert at great sin (*na artha*).

Text 49.25

tasmāl lokam imaṁ rājan svapna-māyā-manoratham
vīkṣyāyamyātmanātmānaṁ samaḥ śānto bhava prabho

Therefore, O King, looking upon this world as a dream, a magician's illusion or a flight of fancy, please control your mind with intelligence and become equipoised and peaceful, my lord.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Firmly convinced (*vīkṣya*) that this world is a dream, illusion or fantasy, controlling the mind (*ātmānam*) by intelligence (*ātmanā*), being without greed (*śāntaḥ*), be equal to your sons and the Pāṇḍavas. Or being equal to them, be happy (*samaḥ*). Otherwise you will suffer. Or, be fixed in your intelligence on the Lord (*samaḥ*). The essence of his instruction is that the king can gain happiness by treating his sons and the Pāṇḍavas with equal affection. You are capable of doing this (*prabho*)! Being intelligent enough to grasp the meaning of Akrūra's words, the king can be successful. O king (*rājan*)! This is the chief dharma of the king.

Text 49.26

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca
yathā vadati kalyāṇīṁ vācaṁ dāna-pate bhavān
tathānayā na tṛpyāmi martyaḥ prāpya yathāmṛtam

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O master of charity, I can never be satiated while hearing your auspicious words. I am like a mortal who has obtained the nectar of the gods.

COMMENTARY: Having made up his mind that he could not be equal to his sons and the Pāṇḍavas, in answer to Akrūra's statement that he was capable of fair dealings, he first speaks in order to satisfy Akrūra with cunning, in order to deny his own fault, and to deny his independent mind, and to find fault with Kṛṣṇa. Whatever you have intended to say, exactly that and nothing else, has pleased me. I can never be fully satisfied with your words (*anayā*). You want to give us good instructions (*dāna-pate*—master of giving)! Or I can never be satisfied in the same way (*anayā*), just as a mortal can never be satisfied with nectar. Thinking that Akrūra would be angry if he did not agree to his words, to avoid his anger, he first praises his words, so that Akrūra will receive his words.

Text 49.27

tathāpi sūnṛtā saumya hṛdi na sthīyate cale
putrānurāga-viṣame vidyut saudāmanī yathā

Even so, gentle Akrūra, because my unsteady heart is prejudiced by affection for my sons, these pleasing words of yours cannot remain fixed there, just as lightning cannot remain fixed in a cloud.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Your true words do not remain fixed in my mind, since my mind is fickle (*cale*) because of unequal affection for my sons. *Sudāma* means a cloud. My heard is fickle like lighting in a cloud. O Akrūra with peaceful nature (*saumya*)! You should not be angry with me since you have a good nature. However, this is said with deceptive intent.

Text 49.28

īśvarasya vidhiṁ ko nu vidhunoty anyathā pumān
bhūmer bhārāvatārāya yo 'vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule

Who can defy the injunctions of the Supreme Lord, who has now descended in the Yadu dynasty to diminish the earth's burden?

COMMENTARY: Who can overcome the rules of the Lord, doing something different or false (*anyathā*)? One cannot deviate even a little, even if he is endowed with prowess (*pumān*). The Lord's power is then shown. He relieves the burden of the earth by giving liberation and other things.

Or who can stop what will be done by the Lord (*vidhim*)? He has directly appeared now in this place to show his unlimited powers. Who has the power to oppose? Or he has appeared to destroy my sinful sons (the burden of the earth.) My unfair treatment, the root of the problem, has arisen because of this. What power do I have to do otherwise? Another version has *sa eva svayam avatīrṇaḥ*: he has appeared personally.

Text 49.29

yo durvimarśa-pathayā nija-māyayedaṁ
sṛṣṭvā guṇān vibhajate tad-anupraviṣṭaḥ
tasmai namo duravabodha-vihāra-tantra-
saṁsāra-cakra-gataye parameśvarāya

I offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord, who creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of his material energy and then distributes happiness and distress after entering within the creation. He puts in motion the entangling cycle of birth and death whose chief cause is his pastimes caused by his inexplicable will.

COMMENTARY: "In the absence of independence (free will), the statements of order and forbiddance are useless. If acts are neither pious nor sinful, then there should be no enjoyment of results." That is true. Everything is accomplished by his indescribable pastimes as the Supreme Lord. Describing the Supreme Lord, he offers respects in this verse.

The Lord creates by his *māyā*, which is inconceivable in nature. To show his nature as the Supreme Lord, his astonishing *śakti* is described. He enters the universe (*idam*) as *antaryāmī*, giving happiness to the devotees and suffering to the non-devotees. "Sometimes it is seen that the devotees suffer." The devotees who are always happy sometimes seem to suffer. That is his inconceivable pastime. He moves the wheel of *saṁsāra* mainly for the inconceivable pastimes with his devotees. "But then the Lord shows partiality." He is the Supreme Lord. Or the cause of creation is his desire,

which is difficult to understand, being very remote. Though the statements are true, it amounts to the deceptive speech of a non-devotee, who wishes to cover his own faults, since he lacks the correct devotional mood completely.

Text 49.30

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity abhipretya nṛpater abhiprāyaṁ sa yādavaḥ
suhṛdbhiḥ samanujñātaḥ punar yadu-purīm agāt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus apprised himself of the King's attitude, Akrūra, the descendant of Yadu, took permission from the Pāṇḍavas and returned to the capital of the Yādavas.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Understanding that the king would not give up his prejudice, he returned to Mathurā. As a king, Dhṛtarāṣṭra feared that if Yudhiṣṭhira became king (by his showing equality), his reign would be finished. Akrūra took permission from the Pāṇḍavas and left.

Text 49.31

śaśaṁsa rāma-kṛṣṇābhyāṁ dhṛtarāṣṭra-viceṣṭitam
pāṇḍavān prati kauravya yad-arthaṁ preṣitaḥ svayam

Akrūra reported to Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa how Dhṛtarāṣṭra was behaving toward the Pāṇḍavas. Thus, O descendant of the Kurus, he fulfilled the purpose for which he had been sent.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He reported the various actions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra who revealed internal cruelty with a gentle exterior towards the Pāṇḍavas, for which purpose he was sent by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. O Parīkṣit (*kauravya*)! Understand that the cause of the destruction of the ancestral Kurus was this person.

Chapter Fifty
Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

Text 50.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
astiḥ prāptiś ca kaṁsasya mahiṣyau bharatarṣabha
mṛte bhartari duḥkhārte īyatuḥ sma pitur gṛhān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Kaṁsa was killed, O heroic descendant of Bharata, his two queens, Asti and Prāpti, went to their father's house in great distress.

COMMENTARY: O Lord Caitanya, please deliver me fallen in the great ocean and am suffering quickly, since I have surrendered to you.

Though the Lord should have gone to console Kuntī and her sons in order to make his own words "I will come" true, out of affection for his devotees, in making the journey there was a great battle which obstructed this. That is now described. O hero of Bharata's lineage! You know the nature of wives of wicked *kṣatriyas.* The two queens were agitated by grief on the death of Kaṁsa and did not consider the words of their husband. They left their husband's house and went to the houses of their father in great confusion.

Text 50.2

pitre magadha-rājāya jarāsandhāya duḥkhite
vedayāṁ cakratuḥ sarvam ātma-vaidhavya-kāraṇam

The sorrowful queens told their father, King Jarāsandha of Magadha, the cause of their becoming widows.

COMMENTARY: Why did they go? They went to inform their father. His palace was in Magadha. Jarāsandha had made his city there. That is related in *Hari-vaṁśa*. The affection of the father for his daughters increased when they cried in pain in order that he would feel grief and lamentation.

Text 50.3

sa tad apriyam ākarṇya śokāmarṣa-yuto nṛpa
ayādavīṁ mahīṁ kartuṁ cakre paramam udyamam

Hearing this odious news, O King, Jarāsandha was filled with sorrow and anger, and he began the greatest possible endeavor to rid the earth of the Yādavas.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit as lord of all men (*nṛpa*) or emperor. Another version has *nṛpati.* He made attempts to free the earth of Yadus (*ayādavim*). Another version has *ayādavām.*

Text 50.4

akṣauhiṇībhir viṁśatyā tisṛbhiś cāpi saṁvṛtaḥ
yadu-rājadhānīṁ mathurāṁ nyarudhat sarvato diśam

With a force of twenty-three akṣauhiṇī divisions, he laid siege to the Yadu capital, Mathurā, on all sides.

COMMENTARY: Each *akṣauhiṇī* consists of 21,870 soldiers on elephants, 21,870 charioteers, 65,610 cavalrymen and 109,350 infantry soldiers. He needed many troops to surround Mathurā because of its size. *Hari-vaṁśa* gives the details of how he surrounded the city on all sides. "Since he was religious, why would he attack a holy city like Mathurā?" It was the Yadu capital.

sarvato nagarī ceyaṁ janaughaiḥ parivāryatām
ayoyantrāṇi yujyantāṁ kṣepaṇīyāś ca mudgarāḥ
ūrdhvaṁ cāpi vāhyantāṁ prāsā vai tomarās tathā
madraḥ kaliṅgādhipatiś cekitānaḥ sabāhlikaḥ
kaśmīra-rājo gonardaḥ karūṣādhipatis tathā
drumaḥ kiṁpuruṣaś caiva pārvatīyaṣ hy anāmayaḥ
nagaryāḥ paścimaṁ dvāraṁ kṣipram ārohayantv iti
pauravo veṇudāravaḥ vaidarbhaḥ somakas tathā
rukmī ca bhojādhipatiḥ sūryākṣaś caiva gālavaḥ
vindānuvindāv āvantyau dantavaktraś ca vīryavān
chāgaliḥ purumitraś ca virāṭaś ca mahīpatiḥ
kauśālyo mālavaś caiva śatadhanvā vidūrathaḥ

bhūriśravās trigartaś ca bāṇaḥ pañcanadas tathā
uttaraṁ nagara-dvāram ete durgasahā nṛpāḥ
ārohantāṁ vimardantāṁ vajra-pratima gauravāḥ
ulūkaḥ kaitaveyaś ca vīraś cāṁśumataḥ sutaḥ
ekalavyo bṛhatkṣatraḥ kṣatradharmā jayadrathaḥ
uttamaujāś ca śalyaś ca kauravāḥ kekayās tathā
vaideho vāmadevaś ca sāketaś ca sinīpatiḥ
pūrvaṁ nagara-nirvyūham eteṣv āyattam astu naḥ
ahaṁ ca varadaś caiva cedirājena ca saṁgatāḥ
dakṣiṇaṁ nagara-dvāraṁ vārayiṣyāma daṁśitāḥ

Surround the city on all sides using iron machines, catapults and mallets. Carry pikes and lances above. The Madras, king of Kaliṅga, Cikitāna, Bāhlika, the king of Kaśmīra, Gonarda, the king of Karūṣa, Druma of the Kimpuruṣas, and Pārvatīya should climb the western gate of the city quickly. Paurava, Veṇudāri, Vaidarbha, Somakas, Rukmī, king of the Bhojas, Sūryākṣa, Gālava,

Bindu and Anuvindu of Avantī, powerful Dantavakra, Chāgali, Purumitraś, the king of Virāṭa,

Kauśālya, Mālava, Śatadhanvā, Vidūratha, Bhūriśravās, Trigarta, Bāṇa, and Pañcanada, all unconquerable, respectable kings, hard as thunderbolts, should climb and crush the northern gate.

Ulūka, Kaitaveya, Vīraś the son of Aṁśumān, Ekalavya, Bṛhatkṣatra, Kṣatradharmā, Jayadratha, Uttamaujā, Śalya, the Kauravas and Kekayas, Vaideha, Vāmadeva, the warriors of Sāketa, and Sinīpatiḥ should quickly attack the eastern gate of the city. I, Varada, and Śiśupāla together, well-armed, will take the southern gate. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Texts 50.5–6

nirīkṣya tad-balaṁ kṛṣṇa udvelam iva sāgaram
sva-puraṁ tena saṁruddhaṁ sva-janaṁ ca bhayākulam
cintayām āsa bhagavān hariḥ kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ
tad-deśa-kālānuguṇaṁ svāvatāra-prayojanam

When Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers, the cause of all elements and possessing a human-like form, saw Jarāsandha's assembled army surrounding his city

like a great ocean overflowing its shores, and when he saw how this army was striking fear into his subjects, he considered what was suitable according to the time, place and specific purpose of his current incarnation.

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha's troops were unlimited like an ocean overflowing the shore. The Lord who removes the burden of the earth (*hariḥ*), endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*), began to think, because he was acting as a human for his goal (*kāraṇa*) of removing the burden of the earth. He thought of what was suitable for time and place. The huge army had surrounded Mathurā. The army must be destroyed. He had to act quickly.

Texts 50.7–8

hanişyāmi balaṁ hy etad bhuvi bhāraṁ samāhitam
māgadhena samānītaṁ vaśyānāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām
akṣauhiṇībhiḥ saṅkhyātaṁ bhaṭāśva-ratha-kuñjaraiḥ
māgadhas tu na hantavyo bhūyaḥ kartā balodyamam

[The Supreme Lord thought:] Since it is such a burden on the earth, I will destroy Jarāsandha's army, consisting of akṣauhiṇīs of foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, which the King of Māgadha has assembled from all subservient kings and brought together here. But Jarāsandha himself should not be killed, since in the future he will certainly assemble another army (which should also be destroyed).

COMMENTARY: His thoughts are described. I will destroy these armies (*balam*) because (*hi*) gathered together they are a great burden for the earth, brought together in complete unity with enthusiasm (*samānītam*) and under control (*vaśyānām*). Jarāsandha had control of all the kings by his great power.

pratāpāvanatā ye ca jarāsandhasya pārthivāḥ
mitrāṇi jñātayaś caiva saṁyutāḥ suhṛdās tathā
tam evānuyayuḥ sarve sainyaiḥ samuditair nṛpāḥ
maheṣvāsā mahāvīryā jarāsandha hitaiṣiṇaḥ

Jarāsandha had powerful kings, friends, relatives and associates. The courageous kings, great archers, followed him with all their troops since

they were well-wishers. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The Pāṇḍavas and Bhīṣma did not come there. Because of the great numbers, the foot soldiers, chariots and elephants could not be individually counted. He will again raise an army for battle by his power of rulership (*balodyamam*).

Text 50.9

etad-artho 'vatāro 'yaṁ bhū-bhāra-haraṇāya me
saṁrakṣaṇāya sādhūnāṁ kṛto 'nyeṣāṁ vadhāya ca

This is the purpose of my present incarnation—to relieve the earth of its burden, protect the pious and kill the impious.

COMMENTARY: The *avatāra* descends from Vaikuṇṭha. "Will the devotees also be killed in relieving the earth of her burden?" No, the devotees will be protected. Only the non-devotees will be killed. The word *saṁ-rakṣanāya* is used to indicate protection in this life and the next, since the devotees spread *bhakti.*

Or "The person killed by you, though not qualified, will get liberation." The purpose of the *avatāra* is to give liberation to those who are a burden to the earth. The method is given: to protect the devotees and kill the wicked, later giving them liberation. In this *avatāra* which reveals unlimited powers, the devotees will be protected and the wicked will be killed.

Text 50.10

anyo 'pi dharma-rakṣāyai dehaḥ saṁbhriyate mayā
virāmāyāpy adharmasya kāle prabhavataḥ kvacit

I also assume other bodies to protect religion and to end irreligion whenever it flourishes in the course of time.

COMMENTARY: This is done in other *avatāras* as well. It is necessary. I manifest other forms to protect *dharma* and destroy *adharma* when at sometime *adharma* becomes strong. The same is said *Gītā* 4.7.

Or I manifest other forms at some time (*kāle*). By protecting *dharma* devotees are protected, and by stopping *adharma*, the wicked are killed.

Text 50.11

evaṁ dhyāyati govinda ākāśāt sūrya-varcasau
rathāv upasthitau sadyaḥ sa-sūtau sa-paricchadau

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As Kṛṣṇa, protector of the earth, was thinking in this way, two chariots as effulgent as the sun suddenly descended from the sky. They were complete with drivers and equipment.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Just as Kṛṣṇa, who protects the earth (*govindaḥ*), Bhagavān who appears directly as *avatāra* on earth to relieve it of its burden, thought in this way, from Mahā-vaikuṇṭha (*ākāśāt*) two chariots appeared.

Text 50.12

āyudhāni ca divyāni purāṇāni yadṛcchayā
dṛṣṭvā tāni hṛṣīkeśaḥ saṅkarṣaṇam athābravīt

Eternal divine weapons also appeared spontaneously. Seeing these, Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the senses, addressed Saṅkarṣaṇa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The weapons which were beyond the material world (*divyāni*) since they were eternal (*purāṇāni*) arrived with no effort (*yadṛcchayā*) since they knew the Lord's intentions, being conscious.

halaṁ saṁvartakaṁ nāma saunandaṁ musalaṁ tathā
dhanuṣāṁ pravaraṁ śārṅgaṁ gadā kaumodakī ca ha

The plough was named Saṁvartaka, the pestle was named Saunanda, the bow was named Śārṅga and the club was Kaumodakī. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The same four weapons are mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. It should be understood that the Lord's *cakra* and Balarāma's bow also appeared since they were useful and are not mentioned as coming from anywhere else. The next verse also mentions that his many favorable weapons appeared. Though Kṛṣṇa was capable of doing everything without words (*hṛṣīkeṣaḥ*), he spoke to Balarāma who could destroy everything (*saṅkarṣaṇam*) just by

his glance. He spoke using logic while being under the influence of his variegated pastimes (*atha*).

Texts 50.13–14

paśyārya vyasanaṁ prāptaṁ yadūnāṁ tvāvatāṁ prabho
eṣa te ratha āyāto dayitāny āyudhāni ca
yānam āsthāya jahy etad vyasanāt svān samuddhara
etad-arthaṁ hi nau janma sādhūnām īśa śarma-kṛt
trayo-viṁśaty-anīkākhyaṁ bhūmer bhāram apākuru

[The Supreme Lord said:] See this danger which has beset your dependents, the Yadus! And see, dear master, how your personal chariot and favorite weapons have come before you. Situated in your chariot, destroy the armies. Deliver the devotees from danger since the purpose for which we have taken birth, My Lord, is to secure the welfare of all devotees. Please now remove from the earth the burden of these twenty-three armies.

COMMENTARY: Destroy the soldiers (*etat*). The main goal is to deliver (*uddhara*) the Yadus from danger without harm (*sam*). This must be done because that is the purpose (*etad artham hi*) of our appearance in this world. We are not only here to play. Kṛṣṇa addresses Balarāma with respect in order to obtain his assistance (*ārya*). You are capable of fighting (*prabho*)! This is used to make him enthusiastic to fight. The weapons are dear to you (*dayita*). Therefore make their coming fruitful by fighting. Or by these weapons you will easily kill the enemy. The word *etat* emphasizes the necessity to act. The purpose is to make the devotees happy (*śarma-kṛt*). O capable Lord (*īśa*)! He encourages him to fight. There was a total of twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs.*

Text 50.15

evaṁ sammantrya dāśārhau daṁśitau rathinau purāt
nirjagmatuḥ svāyudhāḍhyau balenālpīyasā vṛtau

After Kṛṣṇa had thus invited his brother, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, wearing armor and displaying their resplendent weapons, drove out of the city in

their chariots. Only a very small contingent of soldiers accompanied them.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

As part of their pastimes, they identified themselves as Dāśārhas and wore armor. Because of the strength of Jarāsandha's army, their army appeared small in comparison. According to *Hari-vaṁśa,* Vikadru (a minister of Yadus) gave bad advice and they were surrounded by a few of their troops when all Jarāsandha's troops came. The two were equipped with their weapons. Just by showing those weapons they made the enemy tremble.

Text 50.16

śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau vinirgatya harir dāruka-sārathiḥ
tato 'bhūt para-sainyānāṁ hṛdi vitrāsa-vepathuḥ

As Kṛṣṇa came out of the city with Dāruka at the reins of his chariot, he blew his conch, taking away their courage, and the enemy soldiers' hearts began to tremble with fear.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa came out of the city in an extraordinary manner (*vi-nigatya)* since he was accompanied by Dāruka. This also includes the many wondrous objects from Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord took away (*hariḥ*) the courage of the enemy by blowing the conch. This caused them to tremble in terror.

Text 50.17

tāv āha māgadho vīkṣya he kṛṣṇa puruṣādhama
na tvayā yoddhum icchāmi bālenaikena lajjayā
guptena hi tvayā manda na yotsye yāhi bandhu-han

Jarāsandha looked at the two of them and said: O Kṛṣṇa, lowest of men! I do not wish to fight alone with you, since it would be a shame to fight with a mere boy. You fool who keep yourself hidden, O murderer of your relatives! Go away! I will not fight with you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing Kṛṣṇa as death, Jarāsandha tried to avoid fighting him. Instead of *bālenaikena* sometimes *bālakenaiva* is seen. I do not want to fight with a boy. "But fighting depends only on strength, not age." I will not fight with a person who hid himself in Gokula out of fear of Kaṁsa. "It is suitable to hide at times to fool the enemy." O inauspicious person (*manda*)! "Why?" You are a murderer of your relatives! Therefore go away—flee from dharma. Another meaning is "Go to your house, because it is not necessary for you to labor in fighting (since you accomplish everything by your will.)"

Text 50.18

tava rāma yadi śraddhā yudhyasva dhairyam udvaha
hitvā vā mac-charaiś chinnaṁ dehaṁ svar yāhi māṁ jahi

You, Balarāma, should gather your courage and fight with me, if you think you can do it. You may either give up your body when it is cut to pieces by my arrows, and thus attain to heaven, or else kill me.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Instead of *tava* sometimes *tvam tu* is seen. The word *tu* in that case means "and." Fight, if you have the desire to fight (*śraddhā*), if you think I am afraid. Instead of *dhairyam* sometimes *sthairyam* is seen. Make yourself steady with the strength of your arms. Do not be agitated and flee away.

Text 50.19

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
na vai śūrā vikatthante darśayanty eva pauruṣam
na gṛhṇīmo vaco rājann āturasya mumūrṣataḥ

The Supreme Lord said: Real heroes do not simply boast but rather show their prowess in action. We cannot take seriously the words of one who is full of anxiety and who wants to die.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa answers sarcastically, taking his words at face value, in order to instill eagerness in Jarāsandha to fight with him. Heroes do not show bravery by praising themselves. That is well known (*vai*). "Will you

show bravery, being shamed by my words and being cowardly?" We do not accept your words in the heart or ear. "Why?" You are agitated because you will kill yourself. These are incoherent words of a person about to die. Or you wish to die quickly by making me angry with your harsh words.

Text 50.20

śrī-śuka uvāca
jarā-sutas tāv abhisṛtya mādhavau
mahā-balaughena balīyasāvṛnot
sa-sainya-yāna-dhvaja-vāji-sārathī
sūryānalau vāyur ivābhra-reṇubhiḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Just as the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, the son of Jarā marched toward the two descendants of Madhu and with his huge assemblage of armies surrounded them and their soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He is called the son of Jarā to show that he had superhuman powers given by Jarā after she joined his two halves together. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are called descendants of Madhu to show how they enacted human pastimes. For that reason, they were surrounded by Jarāsandha's troops. The two brothers shone brightly like the sun and fire combined together at the time of *pralaya.*

Text 50.21

suparṇa-tāla-dhvaja-cihitnau rathāv
alakṣayantyo hari-rāmayor mṛdhe
striyaḥ purāṭṭālaka-harmya-gopuraṁ
samāśritāḥ sammumuhuḥ śucārditaḥ

The women stood in the watchtowers, palaces and high gates of the city. When they could no longer see Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's chariots, identified by banners marked with the emblems of Garuḍa and a palm tree, they were struck with grief and fainted.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The women could still see the flags on the chariots. Kṛṣṇa attracted their minds (*hari)* and Balarāma gave pleasure to their minds (*rāmayoḥ*). This shows that the women were very attached to them. They climbed to rooms on top of the fort, to rooms high in the palace and on to the gates but Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could not be seen by them in the battlefield. They thought they saw something of them however. They became overwhelmed with lamentation. Instead of *arditāḥ* (in pain) sometimes *arpitāḥ* is seen. Being in great pain, they fainted since they were women. It was their nature to have hearts soft with affection.

Text 50.22

hariḥ parānīka-payomucāṁ muhuḥ
śilīmukhāty-ulbaṇa-varṣa-pīḍitam
sva-sainyam ālokya surāsurārcitaṁ
vyasphūrjayac chārṅga-śarāsanottamam

Seeing his army tormented by the relentless and savage rain of arrows from the massive opposing forces gathered like clouds about him, Kṛṣṇa twanged his excellent bow, Śārṅga, which both gods and demons worship.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa would destroy the enemy (*harih* indicates *saṁharati*). Kṛṣṇa's troops were terrified by the arrows of the enemy, but not wounded by them, for it is said that his troops remained intact (verse 35). This happened by his great skills. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, *vyashpurjayat* means "he pulled the bow string and took aim."

Text 50.23

gṛhṇan niśaṅgād atha sandadhac charān
vikṛṣya muñcan śita-bāṇa-pūgān
nighnan rathān kuñjara-vāji-pattīn
nirantaraṁ yadvad alāta-cakram

Kṛṣṇa took arrows from his quiver, fixed them on the bowstring, pulled the bow, and released endless torrents of sharp shafts, which struck the enemy's chariots, elephants, horses and infantrymen. The Lord shooting his arrows resembled a blazing circle of fire.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ah! Hear what amazing event happened next. Immediately (*atha*) he took arrows from his quiver. The sentence continues into the next verse. The arrows struck not only the chariots but everything attached to the chariots. This is understood from the next verse. His arrows created a circle all around, like a circle of a firebrand or Kṛṣṇa appeared everywhere, like a firebrand. He did this by releasing a host of sharp arrows.

Text 50.24

nirbhinna-kumbhāḥ kariṇo nipetur
anekaśo 'śvāḥ śara-vṛkṇa-kandharāḥ
rathā hatāśva-dhvaja-sūta-nāyakāḥ
padāyataś chinna-bhujoru-kandharāḥ

Unlimited elephants fell to the ground, their foreheads split open, cavalry horses fell with severed necks, chariots fell with their horses, flags, drivers and masters all shattered, and foot soldiers collapsed with severed arms, thighs and shoulders.

COMMENTARY: The enemy fell with afflictions in different limbs.

Texts 50.25–28

sañchidyamāna-dvipadebha-vājinām
aṅga-prasūtāḥ śataśo 'sṛg-āpagāḥ
bhujāhayaḥ pūruṣa-śīrṣa-kacchapā
hata-dvipa-dvīpa-haya grahākulāḥ
karoru-mīnā nara-keśa-śaivalā
dhanus-taraṅgāyudha-gulma-saṅkulāḥ
acchūrikāvarta-bhayānakā mahā-
maṇi-pravekābharaṇāśma-śarkarāḥ
pravartitā bhīru-bhayāvahā mṛdhe

manasvināṁ harṣa-karīḥ parasparam
vinighnatārīn muṣalena durmadān
saṅkarṣaṇenāparīmeya-tejasā
balaṁ tad aṅgārṇava-durga-bhairavaṁ
duranta-pāraṁ magadhendra-pālitam
kṣayaṁ praṇītaṁ vasudeva-putrayor
vikrīḍitaṁ taj jagad-īśayoḥ param

On the battlefield, hundreds of rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the humans, elephants and horses who had been cut to pieces. In these rivers arms resembled snakes; human heads, turtles; dead elephants, islands; and dead horses, crocodiles. Hands and thighs appeared like fish, human hair like waterweeds, bows like waves, and various weapons like clumps of bushes. The rivers of blood teemed with all of these. Chariot wheels looked like terrifying whirlpools, and precious gems and ornaments resembled stones and gravel in the rushing red rivers, which aroused fear in the timid and joy in the warrior. With the blows of his plow weapon, the immeasurably powerful Balarāma destroyed Magadhendra's military force. And though this force was as unfathomable and fearsome as an impassable ocean, for the two sons of Vasudeva, the Lords of the universe, the battle was supreme play.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The weapons were like clumps of bushes (*gulma*). *Acchūrikā* is a Vedic word for "wheel." It is used in SB 5.3.3 (*acchūri*). This scene created joy for those who had a warrior's nature. Killing and being killed gives the warrior joy. The Lord produced (*pravartitāḥ*) this bliss of killing and being killed. Or a second meaning is "the rivers of blood joined together (*pravartitāḥ*) into a large river." The purpose was to take away the enthusiasm of Jarāsandha. But to suggest that the Lord produced pleasure in dying and being killed would not be appropriate since the Lord and his army were not harmed at all according to verse 35. Thus the second meaning of *pravartitāḥ* is better. *Durmadān* means proud because of fighting directly with the Lord or greatly intoxicated with their own strength. Balarāma had unlimited prowess (*tejasā*). This was special play (*vi-krīḍitam*) for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma since they were endowed with inexhaustible powers, though they were the

sons of Vasudeva in pastimes. The play was their highest interest (*param*). Relieving the burden of the earth was an accompanying result.

Text 50.29

sthity-udbhavāntaṁ bhuvana-trayasya yaḥ
samīhite 'nanta-guṇaḥ sva-līlayā
na tasya citraṁ para-pakṣa-nigrahas
tathāpi martyānuvidhasya varṇyate

For him who orchestrates the creation, maintenance and destruction of the three worlds and who possesses unlimited spiritual qualities, it is hardly amazing that he subdues insignificant opponents because he is playing a human role in his pastimes.

COMMENTARY: It is not astonishing that he killed the unlimited troops so quickly with ease. This verse shows that he is the Lord of the universe. He creates the world as his play. He maintains and creates, and destroys also (as he destroyed the troops). Every day of Brahmā this creation and destruction of the three worlds take place.

The singular is used instead of the dual since Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa are considered non-different.

Or only Kṛṣṇa is meant, since he is the chief person. He performs this act (*ihate*) in a fixed manner (*sam*), since he has unlimited qualities like omniscience and cleverness, which are accomplished without endeavor (*sva-līlayā*). The word *sva* (own) indicates his completely independent nature. Defeating the assistants (*pakṣa*) of the enemy of the Yadus (*parasya*) is not cause for astonishment (*citram*). He follows after human behavior with such acts as defeating Jarāsandha's troops. This indicates the extraordinary sweetness of his pastimes.

Text 50.30

jagrāha virathaṁ rāmo jarāsandhaṁ mahā-balaḥ
hatānīkāvaśiṣṭāsuṁ siṁhaḥ siṁham ivaujasā

Powerful Jarāsandha, with his chariot lost and all his soldiers dead, was left with only his breath. At that point Balarāma forcibly seized the powerful warrior, just as one lion takes hold of another with speed.

COMMENTARY: The events are described. Jarāsandha was without a chariot. Details are given in *Hari-vaṁśa*. *Ojasā* means "with speed." Balarāma captured him because he was full of power (*mahābalaḥ*) and Jarāsandha was devoid of power in body and mind (*āvaśiṣṭāsum*). Though the two seemed equal from a material viewpoint in fighting with a club, Balarāma was stronger. That is illustrated with the example of the two lions.

Text 50.31

badhyamānaṁ hatārātiṁ pāśair vāruṇa-mānuṣaiḥ
vārayām āsa govindas tena kārya-cikīrṣayā

With the divine noose of Varuṇa and other, mortal ropes, Balarāma began tying up Jarāsandha, who had killed so many foes. But Kṛṣṇa, protector of the earth, still had a purpose to fulfill through Jarāsandha, and thus he asked Balarāma to stop.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma bound him with earthly and divine ropes in order to tie him firmly and insult him. Or he bound him with earthly ropes which were similar to heavenly ones. This means they were very tight ropes. As protector of the earth (*govindaḥ*), Kṛṣṇa prevented Balarāma, because he had a desire to gather together the burden of the earth to kill them through Jarāsandha (*tena*). Jarāsandha would go here and there and gather many troops. Then it would be easy to kill them all. Kṛṣṇa prevented him from binding Jarāsandha.

Texts 50.32–33

sa mukto loka-nāthābhyāṁ vrīḍito vīra-sammataḥ
tapase kṛta-saṅkalpo vāritaḥ pathi rājabhiḥ
vākyaiḥ pavitrārtha-padair nayanaiḥ prākṛtair api
sva-karma-bandha-prāpto 'yaṁ yadubhis te parābhavaḥ

Jarāsandha, whom fighters had highly honored, was ashamed after being released by the two Lords of the universe, and thus he decided to undergo penances. On the road, however, several kings convinced him with both spiritual wisdom and mundane arguments that he should give up his idea of self-abnegation. They told him, "Your defeat by the Yadus was simply the unavoidable reaction of your past karma."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was freed by the two Lords who were interested in benefiting the earth (*loka-nāthābhyām*). Therefore the Lord was not eager to bind him. Since he was honored by warriors, he was ashamed at being released. Therefore he decided to do austerities. Why was I defeated by the Yadus? I will no longer follow the path of *kṣatriyas* but give up my body through austerities. This was his external motive that he showed others. Internally however he wanted to attain great power by austerities. On the path to the forest to do austerity he was stopped by kings with words of dharma. The chief dharma for the *kṣatriya* is fighting. Austerity is for the aged *kṣatriya* if he is detached. It is improper to give up *kṣatriya* dharma because of shame. They gave arguments using logic. Sometimes one wins in a battle and sometimes one loses. Therefore to be dejected is not proper for a *kṣatriya.* You have been defeated because of karma, not because of a lack of courage. It cannot be avoided. Or the words concerning purification can refer to being defeated because of karma. You must enjoy your karmas. This is for purification (*pavitrārtha*). Practical logic (*prākritaiḥ nayanaih*) can mean the following. It is best for the *kṣatriya* to die in battle, not by performing austerities out of attachment for them.

Text 50.34

hateṣu sarvānīkeṣu nṛpo bārhadrathas tadā
upekṣito bhagavatā magadhān durmanā yayau

All of his armies having been killed, and himself neglected by the Lord, Jarāsandha, son of Bṛhadratha, then sadly returned to the kingdom of the Magadhas.

COMMENTARY: He was a king, moreover the son of a brave warrior (*bārhadrathaḥ*), but lamented in his heart because the desire to fight with the Lord did not go away.

Texts 50.35–36

mukundo 'py akṣata-balo nistīrṇāri-balārṇavaḥ
vikīryamāṇaḥ kusumais trīdaśair anumoditaḥ

māthurair upasaṅgamya vijvarair muditātmabhiḥ
upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ

Mukunda had crossed the ocean of his enemy's armies with his own military force completely intact. He received congratulations from the denizens of heaven, who showered him with flowers. The people of Mathurā, relieved of their feverish anxiety and filled with joy, came out to meet him as professional bards, heralds and panegyrists sang in praise of his victory.

COMMENTARY: He is called Mukunda because he gave the highest bliss. His armies were not harmed by the enemy weapons (*akṣata-balaḥ*) because of his sweet glance. *Hari-vaṁśa* says

jitvā tu māgadhaṁ saṅkhye jarāsandhaṁ mahīpatim
viharanti sma sukhino vṛṣṇi-sīmhā mahārathāḥ

Having defeated the great king Jarāsandha in battle, the great Yadu warriors, overjoyed, celebrated. The *devatās* sprinkled flowers.

His victory was praised profusely by *sūtas* (*mathuraiḥ*), or by the Yadus, who came to meet him face to face or all around. They were without pain which had been caused by separation from him (*vijvaraiḥ*) and their bodies or minds were joyful (*muditātmabhiḥ*). These two phrases can also modify *sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ*.

Texts 50.37–38

śaṅkha-dundubhayo nedur bherī-tūryāṇy anekaśaḥ
vīṇā-veṇu-mṛdaṅgāni puraṁ praviśati prabhau
sikta-mārgāṁ hṛṣṭa-janāṁ patākābhir abhyalaṅkṛtām
nirghuṣṭāṁ brahma-ghoṣeṇa kautukābaddha-toraṇām

As the Lord entered his city, conches and kettledrums sounded, and many drums, horns, vīṇās, flutes and mṛdaṅgas played in concert. The boulevards were sprinkled with water, there were banners everywhere, and the gateways were decorated festively. The citizens were elated, and the city resounded with the chanting of Vedic hymns.

COMMENTARY: The instruments sounded on their own. The word *anekaśaḥ* (many) should modify all the elements. The lords of the universe or the

lords of Mathuṛā entered the city. The cause of the instruments sounding was the joy of all people in that city.

Text 50.39

nicīyamāno nārībhir mālya-dadhy-akṣatāṅkuraiḥ
nirīkṣyamāṇaḥ sa-snehaṁ prīty-utkalita-locanaiḥ

As the women of the city affectionately looked at the Lord, their eyes wide open with love, they scattered flower garlands, yogurt, parched rice and newly grown sprouts upon him.

COMMENTARY: The people were wearing the best clothing and ornaments. The women opened their eyes in joy.

Text 50.40

āyodhana-gataṁ vittam anantaṁ vīra-bhūṣaṇam
yadu-rājāya tat sarvam āhṛtaṁ prādiśat prabhuḥ

Kṛṣṇa then presented to the Yadu king all the wealth that had fallen on the battlefield—namely, the countless ornaments of the dead warriors.

COMMENTARY: The ornaments from the dead warriors were unlimited in number. The value was beyond estimate. He gave everything to Ugrasena whom he personally enthroned with respect suitable for a king, since he himself was indifferent to such wealth, and observed the rules of etiquette.

Text 50.41

evaṁ saptadaśa-kṛtvas tāvaty akṣauhiṇī-balaḥ
yuyudhe māgadho raja yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ

Seventeen times the King of Magadha met defeat in this very way. And yet throughout these defeats he continued to fight using his akṣauhiṇī divisions against the forces of the Yadu dynasty who were protected by Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Each time he brought twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs* and fought, and after each defeat thought of going to the forest. *Tāvatī* should actually be masculine.

Or it can modify *akṣauhiṇī.* He was capable of fighting using as much as twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs.* As previously, Kṛṣṇa's army remained unharmed.

Text 50.42

akṣiṇvaṁs tad-balaṁ sarvaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-tejasā
hateṣu sveṣv anīkeṣu tyakto 'gād aribhir nṛpaḥ

By the power of Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛṣṇis would invariably annihilate all of Jarāsandha's forces, and when all his soldiers had been killed, the King, released by the Vṛṣṇis, would again go away.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The Yadus, rather than Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, fought at these times. And even the main fighters like Sātyaki did not have to fight. Kṛṣṇa arranged that their powers increased like blazing fire (*kṛṣna-tejasā*). They were never without this power for it is stated in verse 44 that Kālayavana had heard of their powers. The king was released each time by the Vṛṣṇis (*aribhiḥ)* according to Kṛṣṇa's wish. Or, when all the enemies were killed by the Vṛṣṇis (*aribhiḥ*) he was released by Kṛṣṇa.

Text 50.43

aṣṭādaśama saṅgrāma āgāmini tad-antarā
nārada-preṣito vīro yavanaḥ pratyadṛśyata

Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a barbarian warrior named Kālayavana, sent by Nārada, appeared on the battlefield.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kālayavana suddenly became visible to the residents of Mathurā (*pratyadṛśyate*). In other words, he came quickly. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* explains how Nārada sent him.

gārgyaṁ goṣṭhyāṁ dvijaṁ śyālaḥ ṣaṇḍa ity uktavān dvija
yadūnāṁ sannidhau sarve jahasur yādavās tadā
tataḥ kopa-parītātmā dakṣiṇā-patham etya saḥ
sutam icchaṁs tapas tepe yadu-cakra-bhayāvaham

ārādhayan mahā-devaṁ loha-cūrṇam abhakṣayat
dadau varaṁ ca tuṣṭo 'smai varṣe tu dvādaśe haraḥ
saṁtoṣayām āsa ca taṁ yavaneśo hy anātmajaḥ
tadyoṣit-saṁgamāc cāsya putro 'bhūd ali-sannibhaḥ
taṁ kālayavanaṁ nāma rāṣṭre sve yavaneśvaraḥ
abhiṣicya vanaṁ yāto vajragra-kaṭhinorasam
sa tu vīrya-madonmattaḥ pṛthivyāṁ balino nṛpān
apṛcchan nāradas tasmai kathayām āsa yādavān

Once, Gārgya was ridiculed by his brother-in-law as a eunuch, and when the Yādavas heard this they laughed heartily. Infuriated by their laughter, Gārgya set out for the south, and performed austerities while desiring a son who would bring terror to the Yādavas. He worshiped Mahādeva by eating powdered iron and after twelve years pleased Śiva. Having no son, through association with his wife he bore a son like a scorpion. Yavaneśvara, naming him Kālayavana, made him the king and went to the forest. His chest was as hard as the tip of a thunderbolt. O king! Intoxicated with his strength, he asked Nārada who was the strongest on earth. Nārada told him that the Yadus were the strongest.

Instead of *preṣitaḥ* sometimes *preritaḥ* is seen.

Text 50.44

rurodha mathurām etya tisṛbhir mleccha-koṭibhiḥ
nṛ-loke cāpratidvandvo vṛṣṇīn śrutvātma-sammitān

Arriving at Mathurā, this Yavana laid siege to the city with thirty million barbarian soldiers. He had never found a human rival worth fighting, but he had heard that the Vṛṣṇis were his equals.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Apratidvandvaḥ means "without rival." He had heard from Nārada that the Vṛṣṇis were his equals.

Text 50.45

taṁ dṛṣṭvācintayat kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇa sahāyavān
aho yadūnāṁ vṛjinaṁ prāptaṁ hy ubhayato mahat

When Kṛṣṇa and Saṅkarṣaṇa saw Kālayavana, Kṛṣṇa thought about the situation. "Ah, great danger now certainly threatens the Yadus from two sides."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Playing the role of a human, he spoke to Balarāma because he wanted to take Balarāma's permission in moving the Yadus far from Mathurā. *Aho* expresses lamentation. *Hi* means certainly.

Text 50.46

yavano 'yaṁ nirundhe 'smān adya tāvan mahā-balaḥ
māgadho 'py adya vā śvo vā paraśvo vāgamiṣyati

"This Yavana is besieging us already, and the mighty King of Magadha will soon arrive here, if not today then tomorrow or the next day.

COMMENTARY: He has completely surrounded (*ni-rundhe*) us since he is so powerful. The present tense is used to emphasize that the surrounding was continuous. Therefore it is impossible to escape from here. Though the Lord is omniscient he speaks of different times, saying that the enemy may arrive, following normal patterns of conversation.

Text 50.47

āvayoḥ yudhyator asya yady āgantā jarā-sutaḥ
bandhūn haniṣyaty atha vā neṣyate sva-puraṁ balī

"If powerful Jarāsandha comes while we two are busy fighting Kālayavana, Jarāsandha may kill our relatives or else take them away to his capital.

COMMENTARY: Though understanding that the Yadus cannot be killed, he speaks of the alternative: Jarāsandha will take them away, because he is powerful. He speaks in this way out of affection or instills fear so that he can relocate the Yadus to Dvārakā.

Text 50.48

tasmād adya vidhāsyāmo durgaṁ dvipada-durgamam
tatra jñātīn samādhāya yavanaṁ ghātayāmahe

“Therefore we will immediately construct a fortress that no human force can penetrate. Let us settle our family members there and then kill the barbarian king.”

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa uses the plural (*vidhāsyāmaḥ* – we will create) to show respect to Balarāma. We will place the Yadus there comfortably (*sam-ādhāya*). We will have him killed. They would not kill him personally so that Śiva’s boon would not be contradicted. (Mucukunda would do it.)

This is the explanation. Mathurā has an area of twenty yojanas, within which there is Vṛndāvana belonging to Nanda. We however will have continual expansion in terms of wealth, family members and powers. The Lord’s reason is explained in the *Hari-vaṁśa.*

iyaṁ ca māthurī bhūmir alpā gamyā parasya tu
vṛddhiś cāpi parāsmākaṁ balato mitratas tathā
kumara-koṭyo yāś cemā gaṇāś caiva padātināṁ
eṣām apīha vasatāṁ saṁmardam upalakṣaye

Mathurā will be too small in the future for the increase of population from our and others’ armies, friends, and unlimited children. There is also a host of foot soldiers. The place will be crowded with all these people living here.

We need a bigger place as a residence. By staying here, we will spread into Vraja. We should live far away, in Kuśasthalī, which is not related to Mathurā, on the advice of Vikadru. With this desire the Lord, skillful at deliberation (*bhagavān*), gave advice.

Text 50.49

iti sammantrya bhagavān durgaṁ dvādaśa-yojanam
antaḥ-samudre nagaraṁ kṛtsnādbhutam acīkarat

After thus discussing the matter with Balarāma, the Lord had a fortress measuring twelve yojanas in circumference built within the sea. Inside that fort he had a city built containing all kinds of wonderful things.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The city measured twelve yojanas within the sea. Its outer portions measured eighteen yojanas according to other sources. Thus it was thirty

yojanas in diameter.

aṣṭābhir yavamadhye syāḍ aṅgulaṁ dvādaśāṅulam
tālam tri-tālako hasto hastua dvau kiṣkur ucyate
kiṣku-dvayam dhanuḥ prokaṁ dhanuso dv-isahasrakam
krośaḥ krośau tu gavyutir gavyutī dve tu yojanam

Eight *yavas* equals one *aṅgula*. Twelve *aṅgulas* makes one *tāla.* Three *tālas* makes a *hasta*. Two *hastas* makes one *kiṣku.* Two *kiṣkus* make a *dhanu.* Two thousand *dhanus* is a *krośa.* Two *krośas* make a *gavyuti.* Two *gavyutis* makes a *yojana.*

He had Viśvakarmā make the city in which all objects were astonishing.

Texts 50.50–53

dṛśyate yatra hi tvāṣṭraṁ vijñānaṁ śilpa-naipuṇam
rathyā-catvara-vīthībhir yathā-vāstu vinirmitam
sura-druma-latodyāna- vicitropavanānvitam
hema-śṛṅgair divi-spṛgbhiḥ sphaṭikāṭṭāla-gopuraiḥ
rājatārakuṭaiḥ koṣṭhair hema-kumbhair alaṅkṛtaiḥ
ratna-kūtair gṛhair hemair mahā-mārakata-sthalaiḥ
vāstoṣpatīnāṁ ca gṛhair vallabhībhiś ca nirmitam
cātur-varṇya-janākīrṇaṁ yadu-deva-gṛhollasat

In the construction of that city could be seen the full knowledge and skill of craftsmanship of Viśvakarmā. There were wide avenues, commercial roads and courtyards laid out on ample plots of land; there were splendid parks, and also gardens stocked with trees and creepers from the heavenly planets. The gateway towers were topped with golden turrets touching the sky, and their upper levels were fashioned of crystal quartz. The gold-covered houses were adorned in front with golden pots and on top with jeweled roofs, and their floors were inlaid with precious emeralds. Beside the houses stood treasury buildings, warehouses, and stables for fine horses, all built of silver and brass. Each residence had a watchtower, and also a temple for its household deity. Filled with citizens of all four social orders, the city was especially beautified by the palaces of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

These verses show the astonishing objects in the city. For certain, one could see the knowledge and skill of craftsmanship of Viśvakarmā. It reached its height in this city since he attained the highest abilities by the mercy of the Lord. The buildings such as stables are described (*koṣṭhaiḥ*) with their ornaments. The *udyānas* had mainly flowers and the *upavanas* had mainly fruit. *Āra-kuṭaiḥ* means brass and iron. The city was filled with people of the four *varṇas. Yadu-deva* refers to Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Vasudeva, Ugrasena and others. The living quarters should be understood as follows.

It was surrounded by the sea. To create obstacles, there were then moats. Then interior to this there was seawater bordered by land on the four sides of the city for recreation. Then there were the fortress walls. On the corners and between as well, there were jeweled turrets with gold spires on which were gold spheres with flags. There were gates in the four directions. On top of the gates there were rooms with clear crystal walls for looking outside. Within the fort there were areas containing flower gardens and orchards in addition to wells and water tanks. Within the area of gardens there were temples. Within that area there were stables, grain storehouses, etc. Then interior to that in the east there were houses of *brāhmaṇas.* In the west were houses for *śūdras.* In the north were houses for *vaiśyas* and in the south were houses for *kṣatriyas.* In the center, facing the Sudharmā hall, were the houses of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Vasudeva and Ugrasena. The houses had emerald floors and on top were turrets with gold pots shining brilliantly. Beginning from the hall, there were roads radiating outwards with side roads.

Text 50.54

sudharmāṁ pārijātaṁ ca mahendraḥ prāhiṇod dhareḥ
yatra cāvasthito martyo martya-dharmair na yujyate

Indra brought Kṛṣṇa the Sudharmā assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the laws of mortality. Indra also gave the pārijāta tree.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Indra brought the *pārijāta* tree, or rather gave it up when Kṛṣṇa took it. Or, previous to that pastime, Kṛṣṇa arranged for a variety of *pārijātas* as described in verse 51, different from that stolen from Svarga. These were brought by Indra. The Sudharmā hall however was only one. Indra did not willing send it. The word *hareḥ* indicates the Kṛṣṇa took it by force.

Text 50.55

śyāmaika-varṇān varuṇo hayān śuklān mano-javān
aṣṭau nidhi-patiḥ kośān loka-pālo nijodayān

Varuṇa offered horses as swift as the mind, some of which were pure dark-blue, others white. Kuvera gave his eight mystic treasures, and the rulers of various planets each presented their own opulences.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Loka-pālaḥ means other *devatās.*

Text 50.56

yad yad bhagavatā dattam ādhipatyaṁ sva-siddhaye
sarvaṁ pratyarpayām āsur harau bhūmi-gate nṛpa

The Supreme Lord having come to the earth, O King, these *devatās* now offered him whatever powers of control he had previously delegated to them for the exercise of their particular authority.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They gave their powers to the Lord (*harau*), who for fun gathered (*āhara*) all his various powers for enjoying his pastimes. They gave their powers to the Lord (*bhagavati*), for he was Svayam Bhagavān who had appeared on earth for his supreme pastimes. Śukadeva calls out enthusiastically to Parīkṣit, "O King!" One should see *Hari-vaṁśa* for an elaborate description of the making of Dvārakā.

Text 50.57

tatra yoga-prabhāvena nītvā sarva-janaṁ hariḥ
prajā-pālena rāmeṇa kṛṣṇaḥ samanumantritaḥ
nirjagāma pura-dvārāt padma-mālī nirāyudhaḥ

After transporting all his subjects to the new city by the power of his yogamāyā, Kṛṣṇa consulted with Balarāma, who had remained in Mathurā to protect it. Then, wearing a garland of lotuses but bearing no weapons, Kṛṣṇa went out of Mathurā by its main gate.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

By the greatness of his inconceivable powers (*yoga-prabhāvena*) he transferred all the people. *Padma Purāṇa* describes this:

suṣuptān mathurāyān tu paurāṁs tatra janārdanaḥ
uddhṛtya sahasā rātrau dvārakāyāṁ nyaveśayat
prabuddhās te janāḥ sarve putra-dāra-samanvitāḥ
haima-harmya-tale viṣṭā vismayaṁ paramaṁ yayuḥ

In the middle of the night, as the citizens of Mathurā slept, Janārdana suddenly removed them from that city and placed them in Dvārakā. When the men awoke, they were all amazed to find themselves, their children and their wives sitting inside palaces made of gold.

The word *hariḥ* indicates that he took them away. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that Kṛṣṇa told Balarāma to protect the people. This means that most of the people had been transferred to Dvārakā and a few remained outside of Mathurā. Balarāma stayed among them to protect them. Or he remained at Kṛṣṇa's side amidst a protective army. Or "Do not worry that Kālayavana cannot be killed by the Yādavas. I will have him killed by Mucukunda. You remain here and protect the city." This was his consultation, which was completely befitting (*sam-anu-mantritaḥ*), with Balarāma. *Samanumantritaḥ* is conjugated like the *tārakādi* group explained in *Pāṇini* 5.2.36.

Instead of *sarva-janaṁ hariḥ* sometimes *svān bhagavān hariḥ* is seen. Instead of *prajā-pālena* sometimes *mathurām ebhyah* is seen. *Yoga-prabhāvena* can also indicate that by his powers Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā to build the city. He wore a lotus garland according to the descriptions that

Nārada gave to Kālayavana. He came out without weapons, with the intention of fleeing.

Chapter Fifty-one
The Deliverance of Mucukunda

Texts 51.1–6

śrī-śuka uvāca
taṁ vilokya viniṣkrāntam ujjihānam ivoḍupam
darśanīyatamaṁ śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam
śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhāmukta-kandharam
pṛthu-dīrgha-catur-bāhuṁ nava-kañjāruṇekṣaṇam
nitya-pramuditaṁ śrīmat su-kapolaṁ śuci-smitam
mukhāravindaṁ bibhrāṇaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam
vāsudevo hy ayam iti pumān śrīvatsa-lāñchanaḥ
catur-bhujo 'ravindākṣo vana-māly ati-sundaraḥ
lakṣaṇair nārada-proktair nānyo bhavitum arhati
nirāyudhaś calan padbhyāṁ yotsye 'nena nirāyudhaḥ
iti niścitya yavanaḥ prādravantaṁ parāṅ-mukham
anvadhāvaj jighṛkṣus taṁ durāpam api yoginām

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kālayavana saw the Lord come out from Mathurā like the rising moon. The Lord was most beautiful to behold, with his dark-blue complexion and yellow silk garment. Upon his chest he bore the mark of Śrīvatsa, and the Kaustubha gem adorned his neck. His four arms were sturdy and long. He displayed his ever-joyful lotuslike face, with eyes pink like lotuses, beautifully effulgent cheeks, a pristine smile and glittering shark-shaped earrings. The barbarian thought, "This person must indeed be Vāsudeva, since he possesses the characteristics Nārada mentioned: he is marked with Śrīvatsa, he has four arms, his eyes are like lotuses, he wears a garland of forest flowers, and he is extremely handsome. He cannot be anyone else. Since he goes on foot and unarmed, I will fight him without weapons." Resolving thus, he ran after the Lord, who turned his back and ran away. Kālayavana hoped to catch Kṛṣṇa, though great mystic yogīs cannot attain him.

COMMENTARY: Kālayavana saw Kṛṣṇa coming out of the city, strolling at a casual pace, alone (*vi-niṣkrāntam*). He was like the rising moon, a disc of

light which gives joy to the mind and eye. Thus he saw the Lord clearly (*vilokya*), though he was at a distance. He is depicted as most beautiful.

Nārada, having always seen the four-armed form, described this to Kālayavana. Thus he saw Kṛṣṇa in this form now. His eyes were red like fresh lotuses. Also implied by the word *nava* (new) are the eyes' wideness and happiness, since these are constant qualities of his eyes. He was ever joyful and thus endowed with all beauty (*śrīmat*). Another cause of beauty is mentioned. He was endowed with or manifested (*vibhrāṇam*) beautiful cheeks, a smile and a lotus face.

This person must be the son of Vasudeva, with extraordinary qualities like the Śrīvatsa mark. He was most beautiful with a lotus garland extending to his feet. The previously mentioned details of his form are also understood in what Kālayavana described. He recognized the Lord by what Nārada had described (*iti*). Or he thought (*iti*), "It cannot be anyone else." He then decided, "Since he has no weapons, I will also fight without weapons." Kṛṣṇa was walking slightly fast, and casually (*prādravantam*). He wanted to catch Kṛṣṇa, out of pride, and because he thought he could do it. He pursued Kṛṣṇa on foot, though Kṛṣṇa could not be caught by *yogīs*. This shows the demon's foolishness.

Text 51.7

hasta-prāptam ivātmānaṁ harīṇā sa pade pade
nīto darśayatā dūraṁ yavaneśo 'dri-kandaram

Appearing virtually within reach of Kālayavana's hands at every moment, the Lords led the king of the Yavanas far away to a mountain cave.

COMMENTARY: Though he was king of the Yavanas, he was led away by Kṛṣṇa, who encouraged him by showing himself to be at arm's length.

Text 51.8

palāyanaṁ yadu-kule jātasya tava nocitam
iti kṣipann anugato nainaṁ prāpāhatāśubhaḥ

While chasing the Lord, the Yavana cast insults at him, saying "You took birth in the Yadu dynasty. It's not proper for you to run away!" But still

Kālayavana could not reach Kṛṣṇa, because his sinful reactions had not been cleansed away.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing he could not catch Kṛṣṇa, Kālayavana began scolding him in order to stop him. Since Kṛṣṇa was famous among the Yadus for his courage, he should not flee. Scolding him, he followed him, but could not catch him at all (*pra-āpa*).

The reason is *ahata-śubhaḥ,* literally "he had not destroyed his sins." Since his sins were eradicated by suddenly seeing the Lord, the presence of sin cannot be the cause of his not attaining the Lord. One could propose that if Kālayavana's auspiciousness were unimpeded (*ahata-śubhaḥ)*, he would have caught his enemy. However, he could not catch Kṛṣṇa because of his inimical mentality and actions (*ahata-śubhaḥ)*. One should not lament that Kālayavana did not get liberation, since he did attain liberation later. However, just with the destruction of their sins, demons do not attain the Lord:

ye ca pralamba-khara-dardura-keśy-ariṣṭa-
mallebha-kaṁsa-yavanāḥ kapi-pauṇḍrakādyāḥ
anye ca śālva-kuja-balvala-dantavakra-
saptokṣa-śambara-vidūratha-rukmi-mukhyāḥ
ye vā mṛdhe samiti-śālina ātta-cāpāḥ
kāmboja-matsya-kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikayādyāḥ
yāsyanty adarśanam alaṁ bala-pārtha-bhīma-
vyājāhvayena hariṇā nilayaṁ tadīyam

The demons headed by Pralambha, Dhenuka, Baka, Keśī, Ariṣṭa, the wrestlers, Kuvalayāpīḍa, Kaṁsa, Kālayavana, Dvivida, Pauṇḍraka, Śālva, Narakāsura, Balvala, Dantavakra, the seven bulls, Śambara, Vidūratha and Rukmi, as well as those with bow in hand glorious in fighting on the battlefield, such as the Kāmbojas, Matsyas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas, and Kaikayas will attain *sāyujya* or Vaikuṇṭha by the Lord or through his instruments Balarāma, Arjuna, Bhīma and others. SB 2.7.34

The Lord cannot be attained by any ordinary means:

yat-pāda-pāṁsur bahu-janma-kṛcchrato
dhṛtātmabhir yogibhir apy alabhyaḥ
sa eva yad-dṛg-viṣayaḥ svayaṁ sthitaḥ
kiṁ varṇyate diṣṭam ato vrajaukasām

Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, whose foot dust cannot be seen by yogīs in *samādhi* who have controlled their mind by severe hardship for many births, is eternally situated here, directly visible to the eyes of the people of Vraja. Ah! How can the good fortune of the people of Vraja be described? SB 10.12.12

The special means is indicated for attaining the Lord:

bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt

Only by *bhakti* with full faith can the devotees obtain me, Paramātmā, the object of love. *Bhakti* fixed in me purifies even a dog eater of his low birth. SB 11.14.21

pāda-saṁvāhanaṁ cakruḥ kecit tasya mahātmanaḥ
apare hata-pāpmāno vyajanaiḥ samavījayan

Some of the cowherd boys, who were all great souls, would then massage his lotus feet, and others, qualified by being free of all sin, would expertly fan the Supreme Lord. SB 10.15.17

In the above verse *hata-pāpmānaḥ* refers to the highest *bhakti* devoid completely of an indifferent or hostile attitude towards the Lord. Thus in the verse the phrase *ahata-aśubhaḥ* means his inimical attitude towards the Lord (not his sin). How could he attain the Lord in the manner that Yaśodā caught him as he ran away?

Text 51.9

evaṁ kṣipto 'pi bhagavān prāviśad giri-kandaram
so 'pi praviṣṭas tatrānyaṁ śayānaṁ dadṛśe naram

Although insulted in this way, the Supreme Lord entered the mountain cave. Kālayavana also entered, and there he saw another man lying asleep.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The Lord, omniscient, knew the power and *bhakti* of his devotee, Mucukunda, who was sleeping in the cave. When he entered the cave it is understood that he stood near Mucukunda's head.

śiraḥsthāne tu rājarṣer mucukundasya keśavaḥ
saṁdarśana-pathaṁ tyaktvā tasthau buddhimatāṁ varaḥ

Kṛṣṇa, the best of the intelligent, stood near the head of King Mucukunda without being visible. He did so to make room for Kālayavana and to hide himself. Kālayavana did not see the Lord, but someone else*. Hari-vaṁśa*

Text 51.10

nanv asau dūram ānīya śete mām iha sādhu-vat
iti matvācyutaṁ mūḍhas taṁ padā samatāḍayat

"So, after leading me such a long distance, now he is lying here like some saint!" Thus thinking the sleeping man to be Kṛṣṇa, the deluded fool kicked him with all his strength.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kālayavana did not think that Kṛṣṇa could go anywhere else. He did not consider how Kṛṣṇa could suddenly be lying down. How could he consider this to be Kṛṣṇa, since the form he saw did not have four arms? He was fooled (*mūḍhaḥ*), because of the deep darkness and his anger.

Text 51.11

sa utthāya ciraṁ suptaḥ śanair unmīlya locane
diśo vilokayan pārśve tam adrākṣīd avasthitam

The man awoke after a long sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Looking all about, he saw Kālayavana standing beside him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

While he was ruling in the Treta-yuga of the first cycle of yugas in Vaivasvata Manvantara, he went to help the *devatās.* After that he had

been sleeping, till the present twenty-eighth cycle. He opened his eyes slowly because of being dizzy from suddenly being awakened by force.

Text 51.12

sa tāvat tasya ruṣṭasya dṛṣṭi-pātena bhārata
deha-jenāgninā dagdho bhasma-sād abhavat kṣaṇāt

The awakened man was angry and cast his glance at Kālayavana, whose body burst into flames. In a single moment, O King Parīkṣit, Kālayavana was burnt to ashes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

As soon as Mucukunda glanced, Kālayavana burst into flames, and immediately turned to ashes. O Parīkṣit, you were born in a great dynasty (*bhārata*)! You should not consider such powers astonishing. The benediction from the *devatās* that he could burn anyone who woke him up with the anger of his glance is inferred, according to Śukadeva, and thus not mentioned. Some verses after verse 20 have been interpolated. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* however says this was part of the benediction:

proktaś ca devaiḥ saṁsuptaṁ yas tvām utthāpayiṣyati
deha-jenāgninā sadyaḥ sa tu bhasmī-kariṣyati

The *devatās* declared, "Whoever awakens you from sleep will suddenly be burnt to ashes by a fire generated from his own body."

Hari-vaṁśa also agrees with this:

prasuptaṁ bodhayed yo māṁ taṁ daheyam ahaṁ surāḥ
cakṣuṣā krodha-dīptena evam āha punaḥ punaḥ
evam astv iti śakras tam uvāca tridaśaiḥ saha

Again and again Mucukunda said, 'O *devatās,* with eyes blazing with anger, may I incinerate anyone who awakens me from sleep." Indra along with the *devatās* then agreed.

Thus it is understood that he prayed that he would sleep until he saw the Lord. Until then it was better to sleep, without being awakened. The reason for not awakening is that he did not want to be awakened again

even by a devotee in order to destroy some demons' armies as he previously did.

Text 51.13

śrī-rājovāca
ko nāma sa pumān brahman kasya kiṁ-vīrya eva ca
kasmād guhāṁ gataḥ śiṣye kiṁ-tejo yavanārdanaḥ

King Parīkṣit said: Who was that person, O *brāhmaṇa*? To which family did he belong, and what were his powers? Why did that destroyer of the barbarian lie down to sleep in the cave, and whose son was he?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ko nāma should correctly be *kim nāma* (which name). Or it can mean "Who is this clearly (*nāma*)?" Who is this person by lineage and what is his name?

Text 51.14

śrī-śuka uvāca
sa ikṣvāku-kule jāto māndhātṛ-tanayo mahān
mucukunda iti khyāto brahmaṇyaḥ satya-saṅgaraḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda was the name of this great devotee, who was born in the Ikṣvāku dynasty as the son of Māndhātā. He was devoted to brahminical culture and always true to his vow in battle.

COMMENTARY: The son of Yuvanāśva was Māndhātā, nineteen generations after Ikṣvāku. Māndhātā's son was the best among people (*mahān*) because of being a devotee of the Lord. *Purukutsam ambarīṣaṁ mucukundaṁ ca yoginam*: these sons were Purukutsa, Ambarīṣa, and Mucukunda, a great devotee. (SB 9.6.38)

Text 51.15

sa yācitaḥ sura-gaṇair indrādyair ātma-rakṣaṇe
asurebhyaḥ paritrastais tad-rakṣāṁ so 'karoc ciram

Begged by Indra and the other *devatās* to help protect them when they were terrorized by the demons, Mucukunda defended them for a long

time.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was requested by Indra and others like Varuṇa to protect them. He protected them for four yugas (*ciram*).

Text 51.16

labdhvā guhaṁ te svaḥ-pālaṁ mucukundam athābruvan
rājan viramatāṁ kṛcchrād bhavān naḥ paripālanāt

When the *devatās* obtained Kārttikeya as their general, they told Mucukunda, "O king, you may now give up your troublesome duty of guarding us.

COMMENTARY: After being protected by Kārttikeya (*atha)*, they spoke to him. Or having attained Kārttikeya, their general, they then spoke to him. They address him with great respect. O king! Dear sir (*bhavān*)! You may desist from protecting us which brought suffering to you (*kṛcchrāt*).

Text 51.17

nara-lokaṁ parityajya rājyaṁ nihata-kaṇṭakam
asmān pālayato vīra kāmās te sarva ujjhitāḥ

"Abandoning an unopposed kingdom in the world of men, O valiant one, you neglected all your personal desires while engaged in protecting us.

COMMENTARY: *Kāma* means objects of the senses. O valiant one! You are capable of doing this. They use the word *te* (your or by you) to show affection.

Text 51.18

sutā mahiṣyo bhavato jñātayo 'mātya-mantrinaḥ
prajāś ca tulya-kālīnā nādhunā santi kālitāḥ

"The children, queens, relatives, ministers, advisers and subjects who were your contemporaries are no longer alive. They have all been swept away by time.

COMMENTARY: *Amātya* refers to a tax collector and *mantrinaḥ* to a person who gives advice. They do not exist now because they have attained other bodies (*kālitāḥ*) or they have been taken away.

Text 51.19

kālo balīyān balināṁ bhagavān īśvaro 'vyayaḥ
prajāḥ kālayate krīḍan paśu-pālo yathā paśūn

"Inexhaustible time, stronger than the strong, is non-different from the controlling Lord. Like a herdsman moving his animals along, time moves mortal creatures as his pastime.

COMMENTARY: Time is the strongest among the strong because it is the Lord, Nārāyaṇa. The *aṁśa* is non-different from the *aṁśī* (the Lord). The Lord is endowed with all powers. He does not decrease, since he is infinite. He moves all creatures somewhere else (*kālayate*), in order to play. It is his play.

Or he never tires in this action. His power is shown: he does it like play, as a pastime just as a cowherd gathers cows as play at a certain time. The cowherd is the master of the cows, moving them about according to his will.

Text 51.20

varaṁ vṛṇīṣva bhadraṁ te ṛte kaivalyam adya naḥ
eka eveśvaras tasya bhagavān viṣṇur avyayaḥ

"All good fortune to you! Now please choose a benediction from us—anything but liberation. Viṣṇu alone is capable of giving it, since he is endowed with all powers and is inexhaustible."

COMMENTARY: Good fortune! They say this because they were very pleased with him. Or everything is auspicious for you. Now ask for a boon. Or ask for some auspicious boon, except for liberation or exclusive devotion to the Lord's feet. Only the Lord endowed with all powers can give this (*īśvaraḥ*) or only he is its master. Liberation depends on him. By giving himself, he is not depleted (*avyayaḥ*). Since he is spread inside and outside (*viṣṇuḥ*) he

has the power to bestow such a condition of being everywhere: he can award liberation.

Text 51.21

evam uktaḥ sa vai devān abhivandya mahā-yaśāḥ
aśayiṣṭa guhā-viṣṭo nidrayā deva-dattayā

Addressed thus, King Mucukunda took his respectful leave of the *devatās* and went to a cave, where he lay down to enjoy the sleep they had granted him.

COMMENTARY: He is called famous because of the following. What use are the *devatās* if only Viṣṇu can bestow the spiritual world? I do not want to see others. I should sleep alone near Mathurā, dear to the Lord until I can see the Lord. Therefore, I will ask of the benediction of sleep. For this reason, his fame was spread everywhere. With permission granted by the *devatās* he lay in the cave. This cave is well known. It is situated in a mountain of Davalapura, south of Mathurā district. In *Varāha Purāṇa*, in describing *parikrama* of Mathurā, it is said to be situated within the Mathurā area. This however is from another *kalpa*.

Text 51.22

yavane bhasma-sān nīte bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ
ātmānaṁ darśayām āsa mucukundāya dhīmate

After the Yavana was burnt to ashes, the Supreme Lord, chief of the Sātvatas, revealed himself to the wise Mucukunda.

COMMENTARY: The Supreme Lord who was the best of the Yadus (*sātvatarṣabhaḥ*) revealed himself. This shows his affection for his devotees. He revealed himself to Mucukunda who was fixed in bhakti (*dhīmate*). Just as Yavana had seen the Lord as Nārāyaṇa, to Mucukunda he showed a similar form, corresponding to the description given by Garga.

Texts 51.23–26

tam ālokya ghana-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam
śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat kaustubhena virājitam
catur-bhujaṁ rocamānaṁ vaijayantyā ca mālayā

cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam
prekṣaṇīyaṁ nṛ-lokasya sānurāga-smitekṣaṇam
apīvya-vayasaṁ matta-mṛgendrodāra-vikramam
paryapṛcchan mahā-buddhis tejasā tasya dharṣitaḥ
śaṅkitaḥ śanakai raja durdharṣam iva tejasā

As he gazed at the Lord, King Mucukunda saw that he was dark blue like a cloud, had four arms, and wore a yellow silk garment. On his chest he bore the Śrīvatsa mark and on his neck the brilliantly glowing Kaustubha gem. Adorned with a Vaijayantī garland, the Lord displayed his handsome, peaceful face, which attracts the eyes of all mankind with its makara earrings and affectionately smiling glance. The beauty of his youthful form was unexcelled, and he moved with the nobility of an angry lion. The highly intelligent king was overwhelmed by the Lord's effulgence. Expressing his uncertainty, Mucukunda hesitantly questioned Kṛṣṇa who could not be questioned.

COMMENTARY: The Lord's beauty is again described in three verses (23-25). That form was shown in a special way at all times (*virājitam*). It shone like a million suns (*rocamānam*). Or it produced a taste for the eyes and mind. He wore a garland of five differently colored flowers. Or he shone with the garland. The lotus garland described by Garga manifested as the *vaijayantī* garland. His face was happy with a smile and attractive (*cāru*) from chin to forehead, to be seen by all in the three worlds. Other unmentioned elements of beauty should also be understood. His glance was endowed with a smile because of love or with a smile indicating his continual mercy. Or he had eyes along with happiness expressed by the smile of his two red lips. His age of new youth was most beautiful. He had the prowess of a mad elephant. He had beauty in his most powerful arms, waist, and chest.

Though Mucukunda was intelligent, he was overpowered by the Lord's power and became afraid. Eventually, he questioned the Lord with a choked, confused voice. He was a powerful devotee. Why did he react in this way? The Lord could not be conquered by his prowess (*durdharṣam*). Or he was effulgent with the brilliance of a million suns. The word *iva* has no special meaning. Or because of his power, he could not be questioned (*durdharṣam*).

Mucukunda questioned the Lord because his intelligence was deep (*mahābuddhiḥ*). If he could not understand the truth and *bhakti* did not arise, all his births and actions would be useless. Most of all, he thought that he could relish the words of the Lord.

Text 51.27

śrī-mucukunda uvāca
ko bhavān iha samprāpto vipine giri-gahvare
padbhyāṁ padma-palāśābhyāṁ vicarasy uru-kaṇṭake

Śrī Mucukunda said: Who are you who have come to this mountain cave in the forest, having walked on the thorny ground with feet as soft as lotus petals?

COMMENTARY: Who are you, who have come directly here? It is not proper for you. He speaks with great devotion. To express the Lord's amazing qualities, he first explains that his soft feet should be uninjured by the thorns. Or attracted by the Lord's great beauty and tenderness, he speaks with affection about his lotus feet.

Text 51.28

kiṁ svit tejasvināṁ tejo bhagavān vā vibhāvasuḥ
sūryaḥ somo mahendro vā loka-pālo paro 'pi vā

Perhaps you are the potency of all potent beings. Or maybe you are the powerful god of fire, or the sun-god, the moon-god, the king of heaven or the ruling *devatās* of some other planet.

COMMENTARY: Are you power? If so, that power must have a form. Are you the lord of fire? Fire is called *bhagavān* because of possessing all powers as the vibhūti of Bhagavān. The same should be understood in the other statements. Perhaps you are someone else—Brahmā or Śiva.

Text 51.29

manye tvāṁ deva-devānāṁ trayāṇāṁ puruṣarṣabham
yad bādhase guhā-dhvāntaṁ pradīpaḥ prabhayā yathā

I think you are the Supreme Lord among the three chief gods, since you drive away the darkness of this cave as a lamp dispels darkness with its

light.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In this verse he concludes that the person must be superior to all those previously mentioned. Among the three you are in the category of Viṣṇu, but are the best of those forms (*puruṣarṣabham*) since you dispel the darkness within and without the cave and the suffering within and without my heart (*guhā*), just as a lamp dispels darkness and suffering by its light. The example is used since light driving away the darkness is experienced by everyone. The example does not compare the Lord's effulgence to that of a lamp.

Text 51.30

śuśrūṣatām avyalīkam asmākaṁ nara-puṅgava
sva-janma karma gotraṁ vā kathyatāṁ yadi rocate

O best among men, if you like, please truly describe your birth, activities and lineage to us, who are eager to hear.

COMMENTARY: Though he sees the four-armed form directly, he also remembers that *devas* should not touch the earth. Unable to determine that he is Viṣṇu, he calls to him, considering him to be a remarkable human. O best among men! Because you are the best of humans, please describe, at your discretion (*avyalīkam*), your birth. *Vyalīka* means disagreeable. Or describe truthfully. He speaks in the plural to show great respect on seeing him. *Vā* means everything, or suggests alternatives: what can I do, if you do not describe the birth because it is secret? Or tell what you want to do (*karma*). If you cannot do that, tell your family lineage and name at least. That is, if you want to. This is uttered out of great politeness.

Text 51.31

vayaṁ tu puruṣa-vyāghra aikṣvākāḥ kṣatra-bandhavaḥ
mucukunda iti prokto yauvanāśvātmajaḥ prabho

As for ourselves, O tiger among men, we belong to a family of fallen *kṣatriyas,* descendants of King Ikṣvāku. My name is Mucukunda, my Lord, and I am the son of Yauvanāśva.

COMMENTARY: What is the ability of a fallen soul to inquire about the birth of an exalted person? And how can this (inquires about an exalted person) be told to a fallen person? Therefore, I should tell about my birth and history in order to surrender. He then tells about himself. Mucukunda acts in this way as part of Kṛṣṇa's human pastimes. Thinking himself fallen, he uses the word *tu* (but) to indicate that speaking of himself is a different topic. I belong to the family of Ikṣvāku. He calls himself a fallen *kṣatriya* (*kṣatra-bandhavaḥ*) out of humility. Yuvanāśva's son was Māndhātā. Mucukunda does not utter his father's name out of respect. Mucukunda was his son. O tiger among men! Though I am the best of men since I descend from Ikṣvāku, you are the most excellent. O Lord, with special powers (*prabho*)!

Text 51.32

cira-prajāgara-śrānto nidrayāpahatendriyaḥ
śaye 'smin vijane kāmaṁ kenāpy utthāpito 'dhunā

I was fatigued after remaining awake for a long time, and my senses were overwhelmed by sleep. Thus I slept comfortably here in this solitary place until, just now, someone woke me.

COMMENTARY: Having told his name and birth, he hides his inner feelings and tells of the external cause of his sleep and his actions. He does not mention the cause of his staying awake for so long, out of humility. My senses were oppressed by sleep. I slept nicely (*kāmam*), not for personal enjoyment. Until now, there was no disturbance to my sleep.

Text 51.33

so 'pi bhasmī-kṛto nūnam ātmīyenaiva pāpmanā
anantaraṁ bhavān śrīmāl̐ lakṣito 'mitra-śāsanaḥ

The man who woke me was burned to ashes by the reaction of his sins. Just then I saw you, possessing a glorious appearance and the power to chastise your enemies.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Nūnam indicates conjecture. He was turned to ashes by his own sins. Thus his offense was removed. This indicates Mucukunda's humility. Because his offense was removed, he attained great fortune. Sometimes *śrīman* is seen instead of *śrīmān.* You killed or punished your enemy here by your intelligence (*amitra-śāsanaḥ*). Another version has *amitra-śātanaḥ* with the same meaning.

Text 51.34

tejasā te 'viṣahyeṇa bhūri draṣṭuṁ na śaknumaḥ
hataujasā mahā-bhāga mānanīyo 'si dehinām

Your unbearably brilliant effulgence overwhelms our strength, and thus we cannot fix our gaze upon you. O exalted one, you are to be honored by all embodied beings.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since our strength is defeated by your power, we cannot ask many questions (*praṣṭum*) such as "Why have you come here? Where will you go? What are you doing at this moment?" Another version has *draṣṭum*. Since we cannot even see you, what is the question of speaking and asking questions? Therefore, *brāhmaṇas* and others respect you. That is befitting. O person with greatness more than all other great persons (*mahā-bhāga*)! The form *bhāga* from *bhaga* here indicates "one who personifies all good qualities."

Text 51.35

evaṁ sambhāṣito rājñā bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ
pratyāha prahasan vāṇyā megha-nāda-gabhīrayā

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus addressed by the King, the Supreme Lord, protector of all beings, smiled and then replied to him in a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds.

COMMENTARY: The Lord, without hiding himself, answered with affection for his devotee. Having been addressed skillfully (*saṁbhāṣitaḥ*), the protector of all *jīvas* by his nature (*bhūta-bhāvanaḥ*), manifesting unlimited qualities like affection for his devotee, spoke while smiling, because he was

by nature happy or because he was especially pleased. He spoke with a deep voice as part of his nature or because of special joy at that time, or to show that he was Viṣṇu. Mucukunda says *tathāhi sajalāmboda-nāda-dhīrataraṁ tava vākyam*: your voice is deep like the sound of a rain cloud. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Text 51.36

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
janma-karmābhidhānāni santi me 'ṅga sahasraśaḥ
na śakyante 'nusaṅkhyātum anantatvān mayāpi hi

The Supreme Lord said: My dear friend, I have taken thousands of births, lived thousands of lives and accepted thousands of names. In fact my births, activities and names are limitless, and thus even I cannot count them.

COMMENTARY: The Lord addresses him with respect (*aṅga*). My births and activities cannot be counted to even an amount similar to their actual number. *Anu* can mean similarity according to *Viśva. Hi* means "for certain." "If you cannot count them, you cannot be said to have all powers." The number is unlimited. The knowledge of the omniscient person is not contradicted by not knowing a flower in the sky (a non-existent thing).

Text 51.37

kvacid rajāṁsi vimame pārthivāny uru-janmabhiḥ
guṇa-karmābhidhānāni na me janmāni karhicit

After many lifetimes someone might count the dust particles on the earth, but no one can ever finish counting my qualities, activities, names and births.

COMMENTARY: *Vimame* should be *vimami.* Though his qualities were not in question, in this verse he explains that his qualities, like his activities, are unlimited. One may count the particles of dust, but not my births which have names according to my qualities and activities.

Text 51.38

kāla-trayopapannāni janma-karmāṇi me nṛpa
anukramanto naivāntaṁ gacchanti paramarṣayaḥ

O king, the greatest sages enumerate my births and activities, which take place throughout the three phases of time, but never do they reach the end of them.

COMMENTARY: The sages count my birth and activities taking place in the past, present and future and cannot reach an end. The qualities are even more. *Guṇātmanas te' pi guṇān vimātum*: it is impossible to count the qualities of you who are composed of all qualities. (SB 10.14.7) Since the names arise from the qualities and activities, they are also unlimited. The births are unlimited because the Lord appears many times over time and there are various forms which are many. The extent of time is unlimited. Counting in order, the great sages like Bhṛgu find that there is no end. O king! You can understand this, since many great sages have gathered here because of your being a great king.

Texts 51.39–40

tathāpy adyatanāny aṅga śṛnuṣva gadato mama
vijñāpito viriñcena purāhaṁ dharma-guptaye
bhūmer bhārāyamāṇānām asurāṇāṁ kṣayāya ca
avatīrṇo yadu-kule gṛha ānakadundubheḥ
vadanti vāsudeveti vasudeva-sutaṁ hi mām

Nonetheless, O friend, listen as I will tell you about my current birth, name and activities. Some time ago, Brahmā requested me to protect the devotees and destroy the demons who were burdening the earth. Thus I descended in the Yadu dynasty, in the home of Vasudeva. Because I am the son of Vasudeva, people call me Vāsudeva.

COMMENTARY: Hear about my present birth from me with attention. I was requested by Brahmā, along with Śiva and Bhūmi, who had arrived on the bank of the Milk Ocean according to rules, that I should protect dharma in order to protect the devotees. He speaks of his birth first. I appeared, not arising from a womb, as the son of Vasudeva, who was born with the sound of drums from heaven. This indicates his fame and greatness. They call me Vāsudeva. "This name already exists. He is the presiding deity of

citta." I am the son of Vasudeva. That is the well-known name at this time. That is me alone. Though it is possible to have that name 'Vāsudeva' while being a son in other avatäras such as Rāma or others, it is famous as my name because of affection for my father. Other names like Kṛṣṇa, Dāmodara, and Govinda related to Gokula are not mentioned as they are secret. Since he is not qualified to hear about some things of this birth, his identity in a previous birth is described. And later, in describing his activities, his pastimes in Gokula are not mentioned, but the description of his killing demons is explained.

Text 51.41

kālanemir hataḥ kaṁsaḥ pralambādyāś ca sad-dviṣaḥ
ayaṁ ca yavano dagdho rājaṁs te tigma-cakṣuṣā

I have killed Kālanemi, reborn as Kaṁsa, as well as Pralamba and other enemies of the pious. And now, O king, this barbarian has been burnt to ashes by your piercing glance.

COMMENTARY: He describes his activities. Kālameni and Kaṁsa were killed by me because they hated devotees (*sad-dviṣaḥ*). O king, shining with intelligence (*rājan*), you can understand this. Or O king shining with the benedictions of the devatās like Śiva! You cannot be killed.

Text 51.42

so 'haṁ tavānugrahārthaṁ guhām etām upāgataḥ
prārthitaḥ pracuraṁ pūrvaṁ tvayāhaṁ bhakta-vatsalaḥ

Since in the past you repeatedly prayed to me, I have personally come to this cave to show you mercy, for I am affectionately inclined to my devotees.

COMMENTARY: I have not come here to kill Kālayavana. That could have been done by other means. I came to give mercy to you. That is expressed in this verse. Though endowed with greatness, I have come here out of compliance. *Viśva* says that *upa* can mean compliance. You requested to see me with pure devotion (*pra-arthitaḥ*) many times (*pracuram*), because I am affectionate to devotees. Just by showing myself, unlimited desires of

devotees are fulfilled and everything is fulfilled by satisfying devotees. Or I came to the cave because I am affectionate to the devotees.

Text 51.43

varān vṛṇīṣva rājarṣe sarvān kāmān dadāmi te
māṁ prapanno janaḥ kaścin na bhūyo 'rhati śocitum

Now choose some benedictions from me, O saintly king. I will fulfill all your desires. One who surrenders to me need never again lament.

COMMENTARY: I will fulfill all desires suitable for a king and sage. Those who surrender to me, what to speak of those who are full of devotion, will no longer lament. Or he who attains the boon will no longer lament. Ask for happiness after this life as well, since you are a sage among kings. You are qualified for happiness in this life and the next since you are a king and a sage.

Text 51.44

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity uktas taṁ praṇamyāha mucukundo mudānvitaḥ
jñātvā nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ garga-vākyam anusmaran

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda bowed down to the Lord when he heard this. Remembering the words of the sage Garga, he joyfully recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. The king then addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: Remembering Garga's words[1], recognizing that Nārāyaṇa was Svayam Bhagavān, Kṛṣṇa, in joy he offered respects and spoke. *Devam* means he shone brightly.

Text 51.45

śrī-mucukunda uvāca
vimohito 'yaṁ jana īśa māyayā
tvadīyayā tvāṁ na bhajaty anartha-dṛk
sukhāya duḥkha-prabhaveṣu sajjate
gṛheṣu yoṣit puruṣaś ca vañcitaḥ

Śrī Mucukunda said: O Lord, I am bewildered by your illusory energy. Unaware of my real benefit, I do not worship you but instead become attached to family affairs, which are actually sources of misery and am cheated.

COMMENTARY: O Supreme Lord! Because this *māyā* belongs to you (*tvadīyayā*), it is difficult to overcome. Therefore, I am especially bewildered. This person (*ayam janaḥ*) who can be directly seen, or this person among all *jīvas*, does not worship you. He is attached to his houses and related objects and, though he experiences direct grief, he never becomes detached. He is cheated by lust and other factors.

Or a person like me (*ayam janaḥ*) born in a good family, not giving up identity with the body by detachment, is completely bewildered. Both men and women have a material vision (*anartha-dṛk*). This person is cheated, by women and house, etc.

Text 51.46

labdhvā jano durlabham atra mānuṣaṁ
kathañcid avyaṅgam ayatnato 'nagha
pādāravindaṁ na bhajaty asan-matir
gṛhāndha-kūpe patito yathā paśuḥ

O Lord who destroys all suffering! That person, despite having somehow or other automatically obtained the rare and highly evolved human form of life, does not worship your lotus feet even inattentively since he is devoid of discrimination, is like an animal. He falls into the blind well of material life.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Mānuṣaṁ should be *mānuṣyam* (the human form of life). O Lord who destroys all suffering (*anagha*) for the person who worships you even a little! By karma (*kathañcit*), having attained a human form, he does not worship lotus feet. He does not mention "your" feet since it is understood from the context. He does not worship with reverence or worships inattentively. This is because he is without discrimination (*asan-matiḥ*) like an animal. Thus he falls into the dark well of household life.

Text 51.47

mamaiṣa kālo 'jita niṣphalo gato
rājya-śriyonnaddha-madasya bhū-pateḥ
martyātma-buddheḥ suta-dāra-kośa-bhūṣv
āsajjamānasya duranta-cintayā

O Lord! You have not brought me under your control! I have wasted all this time, becoming more and more intoxicated by my domain and opulence as an earthly king. Misidentifying the mortal body as the self, becoming attached to children, wives, treasury and land, I suffered endless anxiety.

COMMENTARY: I have wasted many yugas (*eṣaḥ kālaḥ*). This is the best time, since you have appeared now (*eṣaḥ kālaḥ*) but I have wasted it. Or this time, at the end of Dvāparā has been wasted. O Lord not under the control of time (*ajita*)! Or O Lord who has not been controlled by me through bhakti! Thus my time has been wasted. I think I am a king and have become completely intoxicated with domain and wealth. Thus I think I am the body. Or because I think I am the body, I identify as a king and become intoxicated. I am constantly worried about raising children, etc. That is described in the following. *Idam adya mayā labdham*: today I have obtained this. (BG 16.13)

Or I was overcome with worries ending in suffering. Not only was my time spent uselessly, but it was full of grief also. Or a person like me does not worship your lotus feet. Thus I pass my life uselessly. But not only is it useless because of not worshipping you. It gives suffering because of worrying about the kingdom.

Text 51.48

kalevare 'smin ghaṭa-kuḍya-sannibhe
nirūḍha-māno nara-deva ity aham
vṛto rathebhāśva-padāty-anīkapair
gāṁ paryaṭaṁs tvāgaṇayan su-durmadaḥ

With deep arrogance I took myself to be the body, which is a material object like a pot or a wall. Thinking myself a god among men, I traveled

the earth surrounded by my charioteers, elephants, cavalry, foot soldiers and generals, disregarding you in my deluding pride.

COMMENTARY: In this body, experienced by everyone as an unconscious object like a pot, or in this body, the shelter of all faults, surrounded by chariots, four parts of the army and generals, I wandered about everywhere on the earth. The later items in the list are closer to the king. I did not respect you (*agaṇayan*), since I forgot, being distracted.

Text 51.49

pramattam uccair itikṛtya-cintayā
pravṛddha-lobhaṁ viṣayeṣu lālasam
tvam apramattaḥ sahasābhipadyase
kṣul-lelihāno 'hir ivākhum antakaḥ

A man, not thinking at all of you, with thoughts of what he thinks needs to be done, intensely greedy, and delighting in sense enjoyment, is suddenly confronted by you, who are ever alert. Like a hungry snake licking its fangs before a mouse, you appear before him as death.

COMMENTARY: Though very proud, a man must die. This will happen suddenly. He is completely unaware. But you are aware (*apramattaḥ*), alert at all times in doing your job. As time, you put an end to everything (*antakaḥ*). Suddenly or beyond logic (*sahasā*), you cause death (*abhipadyase*). An example shows the suddenness and alertness: you are like a snake waiting to devour a mouse.

Or being completely inattentive to remember you (*pramattam ucchaiḥ*), increasingly greedy for objects, longing for objects incessantly for enjoyment, the person suffers on not attaining them.

Text 51.50

purā rathair hema-pariṣkṛtaiś caran
mataṁ-gajair vā nara-deva-saṁjñitaḥ
sa eva kālena duratyayena te
kalevaro viṭ-kṛmi-bhasma-saṁjñitaḥ

The body that at first rides high on fierce elephants or chariots adorned with gold and is known by the name "king" is later, by your invincible

power of time, called "feces," "worms," or "ashes."

COMMENTARY: In dying, the body will take a ghastly form. This is described with disgust. The body which was moving on a chariot becomes ashes, etc. by the force of your (*te*) time. Using the masculine for *kalevaram* is poetic license. Time cannot be stopped by any means, such as sacrifices or yoga (*duratyayena*), because it is your *aṁśa* (*te*).

Text 51.51

nirjitya dik-cakram abhūta-vigraho
varāsana-sthaḥ sama-rāja-vanditaḥ
gṛheṣu maithunya-sukheṣu yoṣitāṁ
krīḍā-mṛgaḥ pūruṣa īśa nīyate

Having conquered the entire circle of directions and being thus free of conflict, a man sits on a splendid throne, receiving praise from leaders who were once his equals. But when he enters the women's chambers, where sex pleasure is found, he is led about like a pet animal, O Lord.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

There is no happiness at death for a person who has lived a life of enjoyment. Even in being a king with all enjoyment one suffers because of dependence. This is explained in two verses (51-52). Though situated on a great throne, he is led by women, and even their female servants. O Lord, this happens because they are all subject to your *māyā.*

Text 51.52

karoti karmāṇi tapaḥ-suniṣṭhito
nivṛtta-bhogas tad-apekṣayādadat
punaś ca bhūyāsam ahaṁ sva-rāḍ iti
pravṛddha-tarṣo na sukhāya kalpate

A king who desires even greater power than he already possesses strictly performs his Vedic duties, carefully practicing austerity and forgoing sense enjoyment. But he whose urges are so rampant, thinking "I am independent and supreme," cannot attain happiness.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though following dharma and expecting a happy after life, a person only encounters suffering. A person engages in activities like sacrifices and vows because of being fixed in austerity. Though he renounces enjoyment, he performs his charities, etc., with the expectation of enjoyment, or he gives donations as a part of his pious *karmas*. In doing so he suffers because of the depletion of material wealth in this life. And he is not qualified for happiness even in after life, for he must fear falling from that position. *Kṣayiṣṇor nāsti nirvṛttiḥ*: there is no happiness in what is temporary. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

deva-loka-gatiṁ prāpto nātha deva-gaṇo 'pi hi
mattaḥ sāhāyya kāmo 'bhūc chāśvatī kutra nirvṛtiḥ

O Lord! Even the *devatās* who attained the goal of Svarga desired help from me (Mucukunda). Where is the eternal happiness? *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Text 51.53

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareśe tvayi jāyate matiḥ

When the material life of a wandering soul has ceased, O Acyuta, he may attain the association of your devotees. And when he associates with them, there awakens in him devotion unto you—who take shelter of your devotees and are independent of higher and lower beings.

COMMENTARY: When or if *saṁsāra* is destroyed, association with your devotees occurs. The potential form (*bhavet*) expresses a possibility. You are unfailing in your persistence. Or when there is a rejection of family life, association arises. Or when there is liberation in Vaikuṇṭha there is association with the devotees (*sat*) of you (*acyuta*) or with devotees who never fall (*acyuta*). Or there is a steady association with devotees. At that time alone, or exactly at that moment, one develops devotion to you. This is because the Lord is attained through the devotees (*sad-gatau*). Thus the Lord says *na rodhayati māṁ yogaḥ*: yoga does not attract me. (SB 11.12.1)

Why is this? You are attained by *bhakti* which derides (*avara*) liberation (*para*).

Or though you are the master of all higher and lower beings (*parāvareśe*), you take shelter of devotees (*sad-gatau*). Sometimes *rati* is seen instead of *matiḥ*. There will occur rati for you by steady association with devotees after the destruction of *saṁsāra*.

Text 51.54

manye mamānugraha īśa te kṛto
rājyānubandhāpagamo yadṛcchayā
yaḥ prārthyate sādhubhir eka-caryayā
vanaṁ vivikṣadbhir akhaṇḍa-bhūmi-paiḥ

My Lord, I think you have shown me mercy, since my attachment to my kingdom has spontaneously ceased. Great devotees who desire to enter the forest for a life of solitude because of making proper discrimination pray for that mercy.

COMMENTARY: I think that you have been merciful to me. Why? Without effort, attachment to my kingdom or pursuit of material objects has ceased. You have shown mercy by which attachment has ceased. O Lord, you can do this because you have the power or you have done this because I am not capable of doing it. That mercy is requested by the highest devotees (*ekacaryayā*), even having a wealth of enjoyment (*akhaṇḍa-bhūmi-paiḥ*), though this usually disqualifies one for higher intelligence. Or that mercy is requested by the highest devotees even if they own the whole world, what to speak of owning a part of it. Why do they desire the forest? They are devotees (*sādhubhiḥ*).

Text 51.55

na kāmaye 'nyaṁ tava pāda-sevanād
akiñcana-prārthyatamād varaṁ vibho
ārādhya kas tvāṁ hy apavarga-daṁ hare
vṛṇīta āryo varam ātma-bandhanam

O all-powerful one, I desire no boon other than service to your lotus feet, the boon most eagerly sought by those who reject liberation as

insignificant. O Hari, what enlightened person who worships you, the giver of *bhakti,* would choose a boon that causes his own bondage?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I do not desire anything for getting blessings other than service to your lotus feet, by direct engagements. I desire only that. Why? It is desired by the devotees who regard even liberation as insignificant (*akiñcana*). They pray for *bhakti.* More than that, they pray to see you. And more than that, they pray for service to your lotus feet. It is greater than all other human goals. He calls out for qualification. O powerful lord, capable of bestowing happiness of all human goals (*vibho*)! Worshipping or attaining you (*ārādhya*), who gives *bhakti (apavarga),* what person would accept bondage? *Apavarga* means *bhakti* as in the following:

apavargaś cāpi bhavati yo 'sau bhagavati sarva-bhūtātmany anātmye 'nirukte 'nilayane paramātmani vāsudeve 'nanya-nimitta-bhakti-yoga-lakṣaṇo nānā-gati-nimittāvidyā-granthi-randhana-dvāreṇa yadā hi mahā-puruṣa-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ.

That liberation, whose essential nature is unmotivated *bhakti-yoga* to the Lord full of qualities, who attracts the minds of all beings, who is not the object of merging, who is not described by material words, who remains beyond destruction of the universe, who is the most excellent *ātmā,* who is the son of Vasudeva, takes place by destruction of the knot of ignorance which causes various material goals, when there is association with devotees of the Lord. SB 5.19.19-20

O*r apavarga* means liberation. "Why do you not accept liberation?" Worshipping or serving you, who are permanent, with some affection, what person can accept a benediction which gives mere liberation? Accepting that benediction is a cause of bondage.

Text 51.56

tasmād visṛjyāśiṣa īśa sarvato
rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇānubandhanāḥ
nirañjanaṁ nirguṇam advayaṁ paraṁ
tvāṁ jñāpti-mātraṁ puruṣaṁ vrajāmy aham

Therefore, O Lord, having put aside all objects of material desire, which are bound to the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness, I am approaching you, in human form, for shelter. You are not covered by mundane designations; are beyond the guṇas, non-dual, and pure consciousness.

COMMENTARY: I reject all results (*aśiśaḥ*) completely, even liberation, which are contrary to serving your feet. Even *jñāna* is in *sattva* and therefore a cause of bondage. I surrender to your alone (*advayam*). Why? You are the Supreme Lord (*param puruṣam*) or the supreme person. Therefore, you have unlimited qualities (*nirguṇam*) or you expand unlimitedly by spreading *bhakti*. Therefore, you are continually attractive (*nirañjanam*). Since you are pure knowledge, you are awareness itself, with no dependence on another source of knowledge. I approach you. Let others accept other results.

O I have a great longing for a long time. "I cannot give that for which you take shelter of me." You are capable of giving everything (*īśa*). Or you know more than what is to be known from other sources (*jñapti-mātram*). You can give more than what is requested (*īśa*).

Text 51.57

ciram iha vṛjinārtas tapyamāno 'nutāpair
aviṭṛṣa-ṣaḍ-amitro 'labdha-śāntiḥ kathañcit
śaraṇa-da samupetas tvat-padābjaṁ parātman
abhayam ṛtam aśokaṁ pāhi māpannam īśa

For so long I have been pained by troubles in this world and have been burning with lamentation. My six enemies are never satiated, and I can find no peace. Therefore, O giver of shelter, O Supreme Soul, please protect me. O Lord, in the midst of danger I have by good fortune approached your lotus feet, which are the truth and which thus make one fearless and free of sorrow.

COMMENTARY: Now you should not disregard me. Protect me completely. He speaks with humility. I am suffering from the experience of sins in *saṁsāra* (*iha*) for a long time, suffering from lamentation after exhaustion of pious results. Or I am suffering from sinful karmas (*vṛjinaḥ*) and actions

of lust at the present moment (*anutāpaiḥ*). This means external and internal suffering. I have no peace at all, by which I can have steadiness and happiness.

I have attained closeness (*upeta*) to your feet directly (*sam*) or in an indescribable manner with a revelation of your form, without my endeavor (*kathañcit*). O giver of shelter! You give shelter according to your promise. *Ārtānāṁ śaraṇaṁ tv aham*: I am the shelter for the sufferers. (SB 11.26.33) You should not say that shelter is dependent on first having *bhakti* to you, since you are the inspiration for *bhakti. Parātman*! You give impetus everywhere.

You should give results according to the glory of your lotus feet at this time, and nothing else. His feet are described with this intention. Do not give lamentable liberation or Brahmā's abode, or yoga-siddhis which are subject to fear of time. Your feet give fearlessness, are most proper, and have no lamentation. Having attained you, protect me from danger or from all obstacles, since you are compassionate to the miserable. He repeats that he has attained the Lord out of great pain.

Only you can do this (*īśa*)!

Or protect me so I have no fear, no lamentation and have honesty (*abhayam, aśocam, ṛtam*).

You never give anything unpleasant. O dearest one (*parātma*n)! The Lord as the dearest has been described at the beginning of Chapter Fourteen. You must protect the person who has surrendered (*āpannam*). You should not have shame or fear in giving mercy to a low person. O Lord, supremely independent (*īśa*)!

Text 51.58

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
sārvabhauma mahā-rāja matis te vimalorjitā
varaiḥ pralobhitasyāpi na kāmair vihatā yataḥ

The Supreme Lord said: O emperor, great ruler, your mind is pure and potent since your mind is not overcome by material desires or benedictions belonging to a greedy person.

COMMENTARY: O king of all those ruling the world (*sārvabhauma mahā-rāja*)! O emperor! O king or person displaying all wealth internally and externally (*mahārāja*)! Or O great king among all rulers of the earth! Your intelligence is devoid of lust and other faults (*vimala*) and profound or bold (*ūrjitā*). Your mind is not overcome or agitated by desires for enjoyment, desires other than me, or benedictions, typical of a most greedy person.

Text 51.59

pralobhito varair yat tvam apramādāya viddhi tat
na dhīr ekānta-bhaktānām āśīrbhir bhidyate kvacit

Understand that I enticed you with benedictions just to prove that you would not be deceived. The intelligence of my unalloyed devotees is never diverted by material blessings.

COMMENTARY: You would not become insane or obstructed (*apramādāya)* by attainment of material benedictions. You would always be careful to ignore benedictions (*apramādāya*), because the intelligence of devotees is never pierced by benedictions. May you never be afflicted by lack of *bhakti*.

Text 51.60

yuñjānānām abhaktānāṁ prāṇāyāmādibhir manaḥ
akṣīṇa-vāsanaṁ rājan dṛśyate punar utthitam

The minds of nondevotees who attain samādhi using practices as prāṇāyama are not fully cleansed of material desires. Thus, O king, material desires are again seen to arise in their minds.

COMMENTARY: One should not say that by *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* with the mind in *samādhi*, the mind will not be agitated by benedictions. The mind of persons devoid of *bhakti*, engaged in yoga, develop desires. Or though they give up objects because of lack of *bhakti*, the impressions of objects do not decrease. O king, you can understand this. Or in this birth as a king, by protecting the *devatās* as part of a king's duty, and even after sleeping a long time, *bhakti* did not arise. In another birth you will attain bhakti. However, he actually had *bhakti*. That is explained in verse 14. Otherwise the Lord would not show such mercy to him.

Text 51.61

vicarasva mahīṁ kāmaṁ mayy āveśita-mānasaḥ
astv evaṁ nityadā tubhyaṁ bhaktir mayy anapāyinī

Wander this earth at will, with your mind fixed on me. May you always possess such unfailing devotion for me.

COMMENTARY: "How can I develop bhakti?" Fix your mind on me at your will (*kāmam*), serving my lotus feet. Wander in a special manner (*vicarasva*), alone or associating with devotees, chanting my name. You will have causeless or continuous *bhakti* (*anapāyinī*) since your devotion is exclusive. Another version has *astu.* This is a blessing since pure *bhakti* is very rare, especially while wandering about.

Text 51.62

kṣātra-dharma-sthito jantūn nyavadhīr mṛgayādibhiḥ
samāhitas tat tapasā jahy aghaṁ mad-upāśritaḥ

Because you followed the *kṣatriya-dharma,* you killed living beings while hunting and performing other duties. You must vanquish the sins thus incurred by carefully executing penances while remaining surrendered to me.

COMMENTARY: First undergo penance. Make a show of destroying sin. The king's lack of mercy is indicated, but actually he had no sin, since such killing was allowed for *kṣatriyas.* You killed living beings by hunting or fighting. Lack of friendship with any beings is not suitable for pure *bhakti*. Steadily performing austerity, as a *vānaprastha,* remain surrendered to me by austerities.

The meaning is this. By lack of pure *bhakti*, you do not have the qualification for serving my feet directly. In Kali-yuga, wandering the earth will agitate the mind. Giving up the association with material people, you should remain in a solitary place for your benefit. There, according to your capacity perform austerities. By offering that, worship of me will bear fruit. I instruct you to do this austerity as a show of destroying sin.

Text 51.63

janmany anantare rājan sarva-bhūta-suhṛttamaḥ
bhūtvā dvija-varas tvaṁ vai mām upaiṣyasi kevalam

O king, in your very next life you will become an excellent *brāhmaṇa,* the greatest well-wisher of all creatures, and certainly come to me alone.

COMMENTARY: In your next life, endowed with pure *bhakti*, your desire will be fulfilled. As a *kṣatriya* and as a king, according to those impressions, now you do not have friendship with all beings. You will become a *brāhmaṇa. Brāhmaṇas* by nature are friendly to all beings. Being friends with all beings one becomes a jñānī. Being a better friend of all beings, one becomes a devotee. Being the best of friends with all beings, one is a pure devote. Endowed with natural compassion, distributing *bhakti*, you will be inclined to help all beings without motive.

sādhūnāṁ sama-cittānāṁ sutarāṁ mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso ʼkṣṇoḥ savitur yathā

When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a merciful devotee, who is fully peaceful and surrendered to the Supreme Lord, one will no longer be subject to material bondage. SB 10.10.41

You will be an *ekānta-bhakta.* Or you will be the best among *brāhmaṇas* since you will be an *ekānta-bhakta.* Therefore, you will shine (*rājan*) and will be the best friend of all beings.

You will attain only me (*kevalam vai*), not my *vibhūtis.* Or existing alone (*kevalam*), with special pastimes, you will attain me closely (*upaiṣyasi*). You will directly serve me. Or in verse 59, the Lord has stated that he has only a desire to serve the Lord's feet. He is already an *ekānta-bhakta.* Since the Lord is full of mercy and politeness, he will not say to the devotee that he does not have *ekānta-bhakti. Śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ*: absorbing the intelligence in me constitutes *śama.* SB 11.19.36

He speaks in this way to produce steadiness in order to purify the devotee completely. By being born as a *brāhmaṇa,* his faults as a *kṣatriya* mentioned in verse 47 will be uprooted. Or this is arranged to accomplish the perfection of his great devotee, as in the case of Nārada.

tāpādi-pañca-saṁskārī navejyākarmakārakaḥ
artha pañcakavid vipro mahābhāgavatottamaḥ

The greatest devotee *brāhmaṇa* undergoes the five purificatory rites, *navejyā-karma,* and knows *artha-pañcaka. Padma Purāṇa*

The meaning is explained in *Bhagavad-bhakti-vilāsa* commentary. According to that, the meaning of the verse can be explained. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the verse according to the first version.

Kṛṣṇa did not reveal his relationship to Gokula, and by knowledge of Nārāyaṇa and hearing his glories, gave Mucukunda faith. It would be unsuitable to reveal everything in the cave, where details could not be seen clearly.

---

[1] Garga met Mucukunda and blessed him to meet Kṛṣṇa in the future

Chapter Fifty-two
Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Text 52.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
itthaṁ so 'nagrahīto 'nga kṛṣṇenekṣvāku nandanaḥ
taṁ parikramya sannamya niścakrāma guhā-mukhāt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, thus receiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy, Mucukunda circumambulated him and bowed down to him. Then Mucukunda, the beloved descendant of Ikṣvāku, exited through the mouth of the cave.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Receiving mercy directly from Svayam Bhagavān, the descendent of Ikṣvāku offered respects on the ground many times, and by the order of the Lord, quickly left with great respect. The Lord did not go with him since Mucukunda was not qualified for that. Kṛṣṇa let him go first in order to understand that he would follow his orders immediately.

Text 52.2

saṁvīkṣya kṣullakān martyān paśūn vīrud-vanaspatīn
matvā kali-yugaṁ prāptaṁ jagāma diśam uttarām

Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the trees and plants were small, he went north, to the *āśrama* of Nara-nārāyaṇa since great souls resided there and it was not populated because it was very cold.

Text 52.3

tapaḥ-śraddhā-yuto dhīro niḥsaṅgo mukta-saṁśayaḥ
samādhāya manaḥ kṛṣṇe prāviśad gandhamādanam

The discriminating king, free of doubt through scripture, devoid of material desires, faithfully concentrating on the Lord, absorbed his mind in Kṛṣṇa and came to Gandhamādana Mountain.

COMMENTARY: Expert at discriminating or tolerating even suffering (*dhīraḥ*), devoid of desires for results from any other process or devoid of internal or external relationships (*niḥsaṅgaḥ*), having great conviction or faith in devotion to the Lord's lotus feet (*mukta-saṁśayaḥ*) (the faith being the cause of the *bhakti*), he fixed his mind on Kṛṣṇa. Or, because of being free of doubt, he was faithful in concentrating his mind on the attractive form of Kṛṣṇa, the form of the highest bliss. He came to Gandamādana hill in the most excellent condition (*pra-aviśat*).

Text 52.4

badary-āśramam āsādya nara-nārāyaṇālayam
sarva-dvandva-sahaḥ śāntas tapasārādhayad dharim

There he arrived at Badarikāśrama, the abode of Nara-nārāyaṇa, where, remaining tolerant of all dualities, he peacefully worshiped the Supreme Lord by performing severe austerities.

COMMENTARY: In Badarikāśrama he came to the abode of Nara-nārāyaṇa. Or, he came to Badarikāśrama, where Nara-nārāyaṇa had taken shelter. His main reason for coming there was austerity, for there the two avatāras who propagate austerity were directly present. Tolerating dualities like heat and cold, with undisturbed heart, he worshipped the Lord who removes all suffering or is most attractive (*hariḥ*).

Text 52.5

bhagavān punar āvrajya purīṁ yavana-veṣṭitām
hatvā mleccha-balaṁ ninye tadīyaṁ dvārakāṁ dhanam

The Lord returned to Mathurā, which was still surrounded by Yavanas. Then he destroyed the army of barbarians and began taking their valuables to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: The Lord endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*), Kṛṣṇa, easily killed the armies since they were without their leader and ordered their wealth to be taken to Dvārakā.

Text 52.6

nīyamāne dhane gobhir nṛbhiś cācyuta-coditaiḥ
ājagāma jarāsandhas trayo-viṁśaty-anīka-paḥ

As the wealth was being carried by oxen and men under Kṛṣṇa's direction, Jarāsandha appeared at the head of twenty-three armies.

COMMENTARY: Men also carried the load. The word *ca* indicates that camels and other animals were also used. The reason is that the order of the Lord cannot be violated (*acyuta*).

Text 52.7

vilokya vega-rabhasaṁ ripu-sainyasya mādhavau
manuṣya-ceṣṭām āpannau rājan dudruvatur drutam

O king, seeing the fierce waves of the enemy's army, the two Mādhavas, imitating human behavior, ran swiftly away.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma born in Madhu's dynasty to perform various pastimes, accepting the activities of humans, ran away. Kṛṣṇa joined with Balarāma whom previously he had kept within Mathurā. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

manuṣya-dharma-śīlasya līlā sā jagatī-pateḥ
astrāṇy aneka-rūpāṇi yad arātiṣu muñcati
manasaiva jagat-sṛṣṭiṁ saṁhāraṁ ca karoti yaḥ
tasyāri-pakṣa-kṣapaṇe kiyān udyama-vistaraḥ
tathāpi yo manuṣyāṇāṁ dharmān tam anuvartate
kurvan balavatā saṁdhiṁ hīnair yuddhaṁ karoty asau
sāma copapradānaṁ ca tathā bhedaṁ ca darśayan
karoti daṇḍa-pātaṁ ca kvacid eva palāyanam
manuṣya-dehināṁ ceṣṭām ity evam anuvartate
līlā jagat-pates tasya cchandataḥ parivartate

This is the pastime of the Lord of the universe, who has qualities like human beings. He released unlimited weapons on his enemies. He causes the creation and destruction of the universe. He is enthusiastic to destroy the enemies. He follows the dharmas of human beings. Creating allies with weaker parties, he fights with the strong. He sometimes conciliates and sometimes creates dissension. He sometimes punishes the enemy and sometimes he flees. In this way he follows the actions of humans. The pastimes of the Lord of the universe take place by his will.

Text 52.8

vihāya vittaṁ pracuram abhītau bhīru-bhīta-vat
padbhyāṁ palāśābhyāṁ celatur bahu-yojanam

Abandoning the abundant riches, fearless but feigning fear, they went many yojanas on their lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Without attachment they gave up the great wealth since this would slow down the enemy who was greedy for that great wealth. Or the two were completely without fear (*pracuram*). But just as a person in great fear flees, they fled as if in fear using their tender feet. This indicates pain on the part of the speaker.

Text 52.9

palāyamānau tau dṛṣṭvā māgadhaḥ prahasan balī
anvadhāvad rathānīkair īśayor apramāṇa-vit

When he saw them fleeing, powerful Jarāsandha laughed loudly and then pursued them with charioteers and foot soldiers. He could not understand the exalted position of the two Lords.

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha was strong (*bale*) because he had twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs* of troops, or because he had personal strength. He laughed loudly, or mocked them while saying, "What astonishing bravery of these warriors!" He pursued them with his chariot and armies or with armies who rode chariots, since they could not capture the two brothers by other

means. He ran after them, but could not catch them. Thus they took the wealth to Dvārakā.

Hari-vaṁśa says:

nivedayām āsa tato narādhipe tad ugrasene prati-pūrṇa-mānasaḥ
janārdano dvāravatīṁ ca tāṁ purīm aśobhayat tena dhanena bhūriṇā

He brought the wealth and offered it to Ugrasena. He made Dvārakā beautiful with the abundant treasures.

Text 52.10

pradrutya dūraṁ saṁśrāntau tuṅgam āruhatāṁ girim
pravarṣaṇākhyaṁ bhagavān nityadā yatra varṣati

Apparently exhausted after fleeing a long distance, the two Lords climbed a high mountain named Pravarṣaṇa,[1] upon which Indra showers incessant rain.

COMMENTARY: Running quickly with their soft feet (*pra-drutya*), they became tired but beautiful because of their special pastime (*su-śrāntau* or *saṁ-srāntau*). They climbed the mountain because on its peak there was continual rain. It was also called Pravarṣaṇa: a place of great rain. The fire could not burn it.

Text 52.11

girau nilīnāv ājñāya nādhigamya padaṁ nṛpa
dadāha girim edhobhiḥ samantād agnim utsṛjan

Although he knew they were hiding on the mountain, Jarāsandha could find no trace of them. Therefore, O king, he placed firewood on all sides and set the mountain ablaze.

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha could not find the spot (*padam*) where they were hiding. Or he could not understand where they were, because he could not find their footprints (*padam*). They hid among the bushes and grass to give joy to the animals. Or he could not find their foot prints anywhere. Lighting fire in all directions, he began to burn the mountain. O king! This expresses the great power of the fire. Giving the order, through many followers, he burned the mountain.

Text 52.12

tata utpatya tarasā dahyamāna-taṭād ubhau
daśaika-yojanāt tuṅgān nipetatur adho bhuvi

The two of them then suddenly jumped from the edge of the burning mountain, which was eleven yojanas high, and fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY: They jumped from the edge of a burning portion of the mountain and landed below the mountain on the ground, not on water or thorns. They fell far away, in a joyful state (*ni-petatuḥ*).

Text 52.13

alakṣyamāṇau ripuṇā sānugena yadūttamau
sva-puraṁ punar āyātau samudra-parikhāṁ nṛpa

Unseen by their opponent or his followers, O king, those two most exalted Yadus returned to their city of Dvārakā, which had the ocean as a protective moat.

COMMENTARY: The enemy tried to find them but could not. They were not recognized by anyone including Jarāsandha's army. It was suitable that they could not be found since the opponents were enemies. The two were the best of the Yadus, giving them happiness. They went to their city, Dvārakā having a moat that Jarāsandha could not cross. Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit in joy.

Text 52.14

so 'pi dagdhāv iti mṛṣā manvāno bala-keśavau
balam ākṛṣya su-mahan magadhān māgadho yayau

Jarāsandha, moreover, mistakenly thought that Balarāma and Keśava had burned to death in the fire. Thus he withdrew his vast military force and returned to the Magadha kingdom.

COMMENTARY: *Bala* means he who has great power. *Keśava* means he who overshadows (*va*) Brahmā (*ka*) and Śiva (*īśa*) with his glory. Thus Kṛṣṇa cannot be killed since he is the Supreme Lord. He had complete disregard for Jarāsandha. This disregard for Jarāsandha was also for giving Rukmiṇī joy and marrying her, by conquering all enemies.

Text 52.15

ānartādhipatiḥ śrīmān raivato raivatīṁ sutām
brahmaṇā coditaḥ prādād balāyeti puroditam

As ordered by Brahmā, Raivata, the wealthy ruler of Ānarta, gave Balarāma his daughter Revatī in marriage. This has already been discussed.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because he went to Brahmaloka, twenty-seven *yuga* cycles passed. Still, Raivata remained wealthy. This was because of the strength of his yoga. He gave his daughter with great devotion (*pra-adāt*). *Raivataḥ* means Kukudmī, the son of Revata.

Texts 52.16–17

bhagavān api govinda upayeme kurūdvaha
vaidarbhīṁ bhīṣmaka-sutāṁ śriyo mātrāṁ svayaṁ-vare
pramathya tarasā rājñaḥ śālvādīṁś caidya-pakṣa-gān
paśyatāṁ sarva-lokānāṁ tārkṣya-putraḥ sudhām iva

O hero among the Kurus, the Supreme Lord, Govinda, married Bhīṣmaka's daughter, Vaidarbhī, who was a direct expansion of the goddess of fortune. The Lord did this by her desire, and in the process, he beat down Śālva and other kings who took Śiśupāla's side. Indeed, as everyone watched, Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī just as Garuḍa boldly stole nectar from the *devatās.*

COMMENTARY: Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, who is directly Nārāyaṇa, who is known as Govinda at this time, since he attained (*vindati*) or appeared on earth (*go*) in order to perform special pastimes, married Rukmiṇī, who also appeared at this time for this purpose. The word *api* indicates all the previously mentioned qualities of the Lord. Govinda can also mean the lord of Gokula. Though he was saddened by separation from the gopīs of Gokula, he married Rukmiṇī. Why? He was endowed with all qualities such as compassion for his devotees.

yasyāṅghri-paṅkaja-rajaḥ-snapanaṁ mahānto
vāñchanty umā-patir ivātma-tamo-'pahatyai
yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādaṁ
jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śata-janmabhiḥ syāt

O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Śiva hanker to bathe in the dust of your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain your mercy. SB 10.52.43

On hearing of her misery, he became compassionate and became controlled by her *bhakti*. He was famous for acting as the messenger, charioteer and guard for the Pāṇḍavas, best of the Kurus, grandfathers of Parīkṣit. You know his compassion, being born in that family (*kurudvaha*).

She was born in Vidarbha, endowed with good qualities like learning, the daughter of a great *kṣatriya* (*bhīṣmaka-sutām*). Being the daughter of a king and devotee, she was born into a good family. As well, she was Lakṣmī personified. Or her beauty could not be measured (*amātrām śriyaḥ*), being greater than Lakṣmī's. As the Lord revealed his unlimited qualities, she also revealed unlimited qualities. The marriage is not described here, since it is discussed in detail in *Hari-vaṁśa.*

Understanding that she would be married to Śiśupāla, she became filled with pain. Writing a letter to the Lord, she was then taken by him. *Svayamvare* can also mean "when she accepted Kṛṣṇa as her husband through a messenger." This indicates her devotion. Actually, Śukadeva mentions this incident with lamentation, being angry out of affection for the Lord. Govinda means he is dependent on the people of Gokula. He promised to return. (SB 10.41.17) He promised to fulfill the gopīs' desires. (SB 10.22.25)

saṅkalpo viditaḥ sādhvyo bhavatīnāṁ mad-arcanam
mayānumoditaḥ so 'sau satyo bhavitum arhati

O saintly girls, I understand that your real motive in this austerity has been to worship me. That intent of yours is approved by me and must come true. SB 10.22.25

How could he marry anyone else? But he did. Why? He is independent (*bhagavān*). Since he should not have done this, what use is his position as the controller? He conquered by destroying the troops. Śālva was Jarāsandha's main supporter and inclined to fight, though all the kings agreed to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, so he is mentioned first. This is described in *Hari-vaṁśa.* For fear of lengthening the commentary the details are not mentioned here.

He destroyed the supporters of Śiśupāla (*caidya-gān* or *caidya-kān*). All others looked on with disdain, or simply looked (locative meaning). By abducting her amidst all the kings, his boldness and power are shown. Or in front of all people he defeated the kings. Thus their shame is indicated by saying all people looked on. Tārkṣa means Kaśyapa.

Text 52.18

śrī-rājovāca
bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutāṁ rukmiṇīṁ rucirānanām
rākṣasena vidhānena upayema iti śrutam

King Parīkṣit said: The Supreme Lord married Rukmiṇī, the beautiful-faced daughter of Bhīṣmaka, in the Rākṣasa style—or so I have heard.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the general account, Parīkṣit with devotion asks for more details, with a desire to hear. Kṛṣṇa is full of all power (*bhagavān*). The *rākṣasa* style of marriage is best for the courageous. She was most beautiful (*rucirānanām*).

Text 52.19

bhagavan śrotum icchāmi kṛṣṇasyāmita-tejasaḥ
yathā māgadha-śālvādīn jitvā kanyām upāharat

My lord, I wish to hear how the immeasurably powerful Kṛṣṇa took away his bride while defeating such kings as Māgadha and Śālva.

COMMENTARY: I desire to hear the method by which Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī. The plural is used to indicate humility, including all others present (we wish to hear). The reason is that it is about Kṛṣṇa. You know this, since your omniscient (*bhagavan*). Or I wish to hear about Kṛṣṇa who is your deity, full of the highest bliss, who has unlimited powers (*amita-tejasaḥ*). This

indicates his valor, which is most sweet. Or I wish to hear about Kṛṣṇa, most clever, of unlimited power. Though capable of immediately stealing Rukmiṇī, he will do this with cleverness as a sweet pastime.

Text 52.20

brahman kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ puṇyā mādhvīr loka-malāpahāḥ
ko nu tṛpyeta śṛṇvānaḥ śruta-jño nitya-nūtanāḥ

What experienced listener, O *brāhmaṇa,* could ever grow satiated while listening to the pious, charming and ever-fresh topics of Kṛṣṇa, which cleanse away the world's contamination?

COMMENTARY: Topics of Kṛṣṇa are attractive to the heart. They are described by four descriptive phrases. They generate piety or are attractive (*puṇyāḥ*). The meaning is according to Viśva. They destroy completely the sins along with *vāsanas* of all *jīvas*. Who could be completely satisfied with hearing them? No one. *Nu* indicates conjecture. Even hearing continuing will not completely satisfy a person. The topics are continually fresh. Is the listener like an animal without discrimination? He knows the meaning of scriptures (*śruta-jñaḥ*).

vayaṁ tu na vitṛpyāma uttama-śloka-vikrame
yac-chṛṇvatāṁ rasa-jñānāṁ svādu svādu pade pade

We are not fully satisfied with the exploits of the Lord whose fame is the highest, because at every moment those exploits become more relishable for the hearers who have knowledge of *rasa.* SB 1.1.19

O *brāhmaṇa,* you know the inclinations of my heart.

Text 52.21

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
rājāsīd bhīṣmako nāma vidarbhādhipatir mahān
tasya pancābhavan putrāḥ kanyaikā ca varānanā

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: There was a king named Bhīṣmaka, the ruler of Vidarbha, endowed with great qualities. He had five sons and one daughter of lovely countenance.

COMMENTARY: *Mahān* means endowed with great qualities. Instead of *kanyaikā ca varānanā* sometimes *kanyaikā rucirānanā* is seen. The meaning is the same. Her great beauty is indicated.

Text 52.22

rukmy agrajo rukmaratho rukmabāhur anantaraḥ
rukmakeśo rukmamālī rukmiṇy eṣā svasā satī

Rukmī was the first-born son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmabāhu, Rukmakeśa and Rukmamālī. Their sister was the excellent Rukmiṇī.

COMMENTARY: As the eldest son, Rukmī was to be respected by all. Rukmiṇī was the youngest, their sister (*svasā*), endowed with all qualities (*satī*).

Text 52.23

sopaśrutya mukundasya rūpa-vīrya-guṇa-śriyaḥ
gṛhāgatair gīyamānās taṁ mene sadṛśaṁ patim

Hearing of the beauty, prowess, character and opulence of Mukunda from visitors to the palace who sang his praises, Rukmiṇī decided that he would be the perfect husband for her.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa was a wealth of beauty, prowess and qualities. Though prowess is included within qualities it is mentioned separately because this quality was expected of anyone who was a *kṣatriya*. The order in which the items give bliss is as follows: beauty, prowess and then other qualities. She heard from being close to all who came to her father's house and sang his glories, since many poets had composed songs about him. They described him loudly, in sweet voices, with affection. He was suitable because of the similarity with her.

Text 52.24

tāṁ buddhi-lakṣaṇaudārya-rūpa-śīla-guṇāśrayām
kṛṣṇaś ca sadṛśīṁ bhāryāṁ samudvoḍhuṁ mano dadhe

Kṛṣṇa knew that Rukmiṇī possessed intelligence, auspicious bodily markings, beauty, proper behavior and all other good qualities.

Concluding that she would be a similar wife for him, he made up his mind to marry her.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Her bodily marks were similar to the Lord's. She had generosity (*audārya*) or greatness of family lineage and a pleasant nature (*śīla*). She had qualities like tenderness, fragrance and shyness. She was the shelter of these features. *Ca* means "though." Though he attracted all minds and though he was Bhagavān, he was attracted to her. Though *buddhi* and what follows in the list are all included in qualities, they are separately mentioned as special features of Rukmiṇī. She was similar to Kṛṣṇa. The marks on the feet are similar but on reverse feet. This similarity is praiseworthy in the science of palm reading. There is no significance in the order of the qualities mentioned. The similarity with Kṛṣṇa indicates that all others were subordinate to her. He decided to marry her in a conclusive way—by abducting her. Or he always thought about it (*mano dadhe*). She was also similar because of being one with Rādhā and other *gopīs* in her qualities. Therefore, he always thought of marrying her. Until that time he did not think of this.

Text 52.25

bandhūnām icchatāṁ dātuṁ kṛṣṇāya bhaginīṁ nṛpa
tato nivārya kṛṣṇa-dviḍ rukmī caidyam amanyata

Because Rukmī envied the Lord, O king, he forbade his family members to give his sister to Kṛṣṇa, although they wanted to. Instead, Rukmī decided to give Rukmiṇī to Śiśupāla.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The reason for the quick marriage is given. Her parents wanted to give her to Kṛṣṇa. The possessive case is used (*bandhūnām*) to indicate that Rukmī did not show respect for their desires. Śukadeva also shows by this that Bhīṣmaka had proper qualities. Śrīdhara Svāmī also explains this in his commentaries on SB 10.53.7 and SB 10.53.35. Rukmī prevented them from doing this. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in astonishment, "O king!"

Text 52.26

tad avetyāsitāpāṅgī vaidarbhī durmanā bhṛśam
vicintyāptaṁ dvijaṁ kañcit kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇod drutam

Dark-eyed Vaidarbhī was aware of this plan, and it deeply upset her. Analyzing the situation, she quickly sent a trustworthy *brāhmaṇa* to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Understanding this, she was deeply upset. "Dark-eyed" means she was expert at love affairs. Considering the situation or deciding she should write a letter, she sent a trustworthy, youngest son of a *brāhmaṇa* priest.

Text 52.27

dvārakāṁ sa samabhyetya pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ
apaśyad ādyaṁ puruṣam āsīnaṁ kāñcanāsane

Upon reaching Dvārakā, the *brāhmaṇa* was brought inside by the gatekeepers and saw Kṛṣṇa, the source of all *avatāras,* sitting on a golden throne.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He went straight (*sam-abhyetya*), not going on a crooked path, and arrived at Dvārakā. This was good fortune. He went through many gates. Thus he was given permission to enter by many gatekeepers (*pratīharaiḥ*), while seeing the path lined with many persons giving praise to the Lord (*pra-veśitaḥ*). He saw Kṛṣṇa (*puruṣam*) who is the source of all forms of the Lord (*ādyam*). Sitting on a gold throne, his dark form appeared most beautiful.

Text 52.28

dṛṣṭvā brahmaṇya-devas tam avaruhya nijāsanāt
upaveśyārhayāṁ cakre yathātmānaṁ divaukasaḥ

Seeing the *brāhmaṇa,* Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the *brāhmaṇas,* came down from his throne and seated him. Then the Lord worshiped him just as he himself is worshiped by the *devatās.*

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa saw the *brāhmaṇa* from a distance. He worshiped the *brāhmaṇa* because, though worshipped by others, he was devoted to *brāhmaṇas* because of his gentle nature. He worshipped with great devotion just as the *devatās* worship Kṛṣṇa with great devotion.

Text 52.29

taṁ bhuktavantaṁ viśrāntam upagamya satāṁ gatiḥ
pāṇināmbhimṛśan pādāv avyagras tam apṛcchata

After the brāhmaṇa had eaten and rested, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the goal of saintly devotees, came forward, and while massaging the brāhmaṇa's feet with his hands, he gently questioned him as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Giving everything else to welcome the guest properly or, with a composed heart, he inquired from the brāhmaṇa since Kṛṣṇa was the first shelter of those practicing the highest dharma.

Text 52.30

kaccid dvija-vara-śreṣṭha dharmas te vṛddha-sammataḥ
vartate nāti-kṛcchreṇa santuṣṭa-manasaḥ sadā

[The Supreme Lord said:] O best of exalted *brāhmaṇas,* are your religious practices, sanctioned by senior authorities, proceeding without great difficulty? Is your mind always fully satisfied?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

O best among the best of *brāhmaṇas*! Kṛṣṇa established the root of the reasons the *brāhmaṇa* is the best in three verses (30-32) by first inquiring with compassion. He inquired about the purity by asking if there was an agreement with the ancient twelve devotees like Yajña and his present gurus. Are the duties not too difficult to accomplish? He does not ask if his duties are being performed comfortably, but rather without suffering. The

intention is to indicate that the *brāhmaṇa* should be able to perform his duties without intense suffering. It is understood the *brāhmaṇa* has been successful. “Does success not result from the effort?” Even in not attaining results he should have a satisfied mind.

Text 52.31

santuṣṭo yarhi varteta brāhmaṇo yena kenacit
ahīyamānaḥ svad dharmāt sa hy asyākhila-kāma-dhuk

When a *brāhmaṇa* is satisfied with whatever comes his way and does not fall away from sva-dharma, those very religious principles fulfill all his wishes.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He praises satisfaction to praise the *brāhmaṇa.* When he is satisfied, he does not deviate from dharma. Instead of *yarhi* sometimes *yadi* is seen. That satisfaction, and nothing else, fulfils all desires.

Text 52.32

asantuṣṭo ’sakṛl lokān āpnoty api sureśvaraḥ
akiñcano ’pi santuṣṭaḥ śete sarvāṅga-vijvaraḥ

An unsatisfied *brāhmaṇa* wanders restlessly from one planet to another, even if he becomes king of heaven. But a satisfied *brāhmaṇa*, though he may possess nothing, rests peacefully, all his limbs free of distress.

COMMENTARY: If he is even sometimes satisfied, then he can be peaceful. Or if he is constantly satisfied (*asakrt* modifying both lines of text), though poor, he rests peacefully. By that satisfaction he is free of body distress like trembling and mental distress like confusion. *Cintā jvaro manuṣyāṇām*: man’s sickness is worrying.

Text 52.33

viprān sva-lābha-santuṣṭān sādhūn bhūta-suhṛttamān
nirahaṅkāriṇaḥ śāntān namasye śirasāsakṛt

I repeatedly bow my head in respect to those brāhmaṇas who are satisfied with their lot, who are devotees, prideless and peaceful, the

best well-wishers of all living beings.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Happy by being satisfied, they make others happy by other accompanying qualities. Thus, they are worthy of worship. I offer respects to all of them individually. They are free of desire and hatred (*śāntān*) or are fixed in truth. The order of qualities is with the best in last place (*śāntān*). Not only do I offer respects with words but with my head, many times. Or *sva-lābha-saṇtuṣṭān* can mean "satisfied with attaining me, the Lord" as in the following:

akiñcanasya dāntasya śāntasya sama-cetasaḥ
mayā santuṣṭa-manasaḥ sarvāḥ sukha-mayā diśaḥ

One who does not desire anything within this world, who has controlled his senses, who has fixed his intelligence on me, who regards heaven and hell equally, and whose mind is completely satisfied in me finds only happiness wherever he goes. SB 11.14.13

This is because they are my devotees (*sādhūn*). The word *sādhu* means devotee as in *sādhavo hrḍayaṁ mahyam:* the devotees are my heart. (SB 9.4.36) The rest of the descriptive terms are lesser causes of being devotees. You have such qualities. You do not depend on anyone. Since you have come to me by your mercy, I am under your control. Order me what I can do for you.

Text 52.34

kaccid vaḥ kuśalaṁ brahman rājato yasya hi prajāḥ
sukhaṁ vasanti viṣaye pālyamānāḥ sa me priyaḥ

O *brāhmaṇa*, is your king attending to your welfare? That king in whose country the citizens are happy and protected is very dear to me.

COMMENTARY: The king who protects the citizens is dear to me. Or dharma is accomplished by *brāhmaṇas* who are protected by the kings. Is there assistance from the king so there is no danger for you and your relatives? O *brāhmaṇa*! By your welfare, the Vedas are safe, since you are directly the Vedas.

Hi means only or certainly.

Text 52.35

yatas tvam āgato durgaṁ nistīryeha yad-icchayā
sarvaṁ no brūhy aguhyaṁ cet kiṁ kāryaṁ karavāma te

Whence have you come, crossing impassable obstacles, and for what purpose? Explain all this to us if it is not a secret, and tell us what we may do for you.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He asks if it is secret, out of politeness. Please tell me what I can do for you. Or, what can I do for you? This expresses his affection for the *brāhmaṇa.*

Text 52.36

evaṁ sampṛṣṭa-sampraśno brāhmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinā
līlā-gṛhīta-dehena tasmai sarvam avarṇayat

Thus questioned by the Supreme Lord, who incarnates to perform his pastimes, the brāhmaṇa told him everything.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He was asked by the Lord who had all knowledge (parameṣṭhinā). The cause of the Lord asking is that he manifests a human form for human pastimes (līlā-gṛhīta-dehena). Or he has a body served by pastimes. This means he is absorbed in pastimes by his own will since the pastimes are so wonderful. The brāhmaṇa directly described his execution of dharma and his purpose in coming, through Rukmiṇī's words in the following verses. Śrīdhara Svāmī says that he simply delivered the letter as is described in verse 44. There are three types of messengers: amitārthā (self-appointed), nisṛṣṭārthā (appointed) and patra-hārā (message bearer). The message bearer simply carries a message expressing the love of one member of the couple. The brāhmaṇa acted mainly in this capacity.

Text 52.37

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca
śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatāṁ te
nirviśya karṇa-vivarair harato ’ṅga-tāpam
rūpaṁ dṛśāṁ dṛśimatām akhilārtha-lābhaṁ
tvayy acyutāviśati cittam apatrapaṁ me

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of your beauty, which fulfills all desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon you, O Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to Rukmiṇī, dear to Kṛṣṇa. By her mercy a fool like me can desire to explain her words.

You are beautiful in form and nature (*bhuvana-sundara*). The beauty of his nature is described first. I have heard of your qualities such as being controlled by devotees. For those who hear, immediately all pain is destroyed. Thus the present tense is used (*śṛṇvatām*). Since the ear hole is composed of *ākāśa,* the qualities can enter and continually fill up the ear. There is happiness for the ear and this spreads to the mind. Those qualities destroy the pain of material existence or the pain of not attaining the Lord. The present tense (*harataḥ*) is used to indicate the very nature of those qualities and later, if pain arises, it is destroyed. *Aṅga* is an address to indicate *prema*.

Then the beauty of the form is described. By seeing the form, the eyes fulfill their function. Otherwise they are blind. The form is the attainment of seeing all beautiful forms. Or seeing the form is the attainment of all desired things. By seeing your most astonishing form, everything is attained. *Yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ saṁplutodake*: what is attained in all small ponds is attained in a lake. (BG 2.46) This is Śrīdhara Svāmī’s explanation.

The form is mentioned last to indicate that it is the principle element of absorption of the mind. The word *ca* (in some versions) also indicates this. By directly seeing the form, *sāmīpya* (closeness to the Lord) is accomplished automatically. Even seeing from far away should not be a hindrance to appreciating qualities. And, moreover, in order to enjoy the

taste of each limb (such as the lips) there is no distinction of form from quality for the lovers.

"Absorption of the mind arising by *upādhis* of qualities and form is not continuous, with a loss of *prema*. When the *upādhis* are absent, the absorption of the heart disappears." The Lord never fails to possess his form and qualities (*acyuta*). Thus the gopīs say:

vīkṣyālakāvṛta-mukhaṁ tava kuṇḍala-śrī
gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudhaṁ hasitāvalokam
dattābhayaṁ ca bhuja-daṇḍa-yugaṁ vilokya
vakṣaḥ śriyaika-ramaṇaṁ ca bhavāma dāsyaḥ

Seeing your face encircled by curling locks of hair, your cheeks beautified by earrings, your lips full of nectar, and your smiling glance, and also seeing your two imposing arms, which take away our fear, and your chest, which is the only source of pleasure for the goddess of fortune, we must become your maidservants. SB 10.29.39

Or she speaks out of great humility as a result of intense *prema*. I am not at all qualified but I fix my shameless mind on you to attain what is most rare.

The deep meaning is this: when Rāma appeared, you gave me up. Though I remember that, without shame I fix my mind on you because I have heard of your qualities and form, which are greater now than previously.

Text 52.38

kā tvā mukunda mahatī kula-śīla-rūpa-
vidyā-vayo-draviṇa-dhāmabhir ātma-tulyam
dhīrā patiṁ kulavatī na vṛṇīta kanyā
kāle nṛ-siṁha nara-loka-mano-'bhirāmam

O Mukunda, you are equal only to yourself in lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youthfulness, wealth and influence. O lion among men, you delight the minds of all mankind. What aristocratic, sober-minded and marriageable girl of a good family would not choose you as her husband when the proper time has come?

COMMENTARY: You have qualities like mercy and generosity (*śīla*). You have knowledge (*vidyā*).

aṅgāni vedāś catvāro mīmāṁsā nyāya-vistaraḥ
dharma-śāstraṁ purāṇaṁ ca vidyā hy etāś caturdaśah

The four Vedas, their six *aṅgas, mīmāṁsa, nyāya, dharma-śāstra*, and Purāṇas are the fourteen types of knowledge. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

The sixty-four types of knowledge are also parts of this. Your age is fresh youth. In the list describing Kṛṣṇa, the former elements are causes of the latter. Since no one equals you, you are a lion among men. Thus, you delight the minds of men. The latter is the effect. The cause of everything is that he is Mukunda.

Her nobility is matched with his unequalled qualities. Her choosing is matched with his qualification as a husband. Her sobriety is matched with his lion-like nature. His attraction to all minds is matched with her birth in a good family.

Or because of her good family, sobriety and nobility, she is qualified as an equal to him. And in reverse order, these are qualifications for marrying him. Or the three qualities together are reasons to marry him. His leaonine nature indicates his *kṣatriya* nature. And this quality is matched with her good family, sobriety and nobility. In the First Canto, thirty-nine qualities of the Lord are enumerated when the earth laments. Seven of those qualities starting with good family are mentioned in this verse. The qualities of the hero are mentioned in *Śṛṅgāra-tilaka*:

tyāgī kulinaḥ kuśalo rateṣu kalyaḥ kalāvit taruṇo
dhanāḍyaḥ bhavyaḥ, kṣamī sthira-ruciḥ subhago 'bhimānī
strīṇaṁ mataḥ subhagavān iha nāyakaḥ syāt

In this world the auspicious hero for women should be renounced, of good family, skillful in love, vigorous, knowledgeable of arts, young, wealthy, well-dressed, tolerant, steady in love, handsome, and proud.

Of these, renounced, tolerant and steady in love are qualities. Knowledge consists of skill in love, and knowledge in arts. Beauty consists of being well dressed and possessing a beautiful form. His power consists of his vigor and pride.

Text 52.39

tan me bhavān khalu vṛtaḥ patir aṅga jāyām
ātmārpitaś ca bhavato 'tra vibho vidhehi
mā vīra-bhāgam abhimarśatu caidya ārād
gomāyu-van mṛga-pater balim ambujākṣa

Therefore, my dear Lord, I have chosen you as my husband, and I surrender myself to you. Please come swiftly, O almighty one, and make me your wife. My dear lotus-eyed Lord, let Śiśupāla never touch the hero's portion like a jackal stealing the property of a lion.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since Rukmī has another groom for me, as a woman, my devotion to you will lead to the greatest disaster in this life and the next. But he, as the Lord, will never be indifferent. Overcome with shame, she speaks of three successive actions which will solve the problem. She addresses him many times out of feeling lowly. I have offered my *ātmā* to you, what to speak of my body. The possessive case is used (*bhatavaḥ*, of you) to indicate her natural position of belonging to him, though usually the dative case would be used (I have offered my soul to you). Do as you wish, and make me your wife. Nothing is impossible since you are capable of anything (*vibho*). If you do anything else, your prowess will be destroyed, O courageous one (*vīra*)! Please come quickly because Śiśupāla is close (*ārāt*). If you do not come it will be shameful for you. A jackal should not steal from a lion. O lotus-eyed lord! Since your very nature is to always manifest your beauty, by seeing you my suffering will be destroyed.

Text 52.40

pūrteṣṭa-datta-niyama-vrata-deva-vipra
gurv-arcanādibhir alaṁ bhagavān pareśaḥ
ārādhito yadi gadāgraja etya pāṇiṁ
gṛhṇātu me na damaghoṣa-sutādayo 'nye

If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa by pious acts, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the *devatās, brāhmaṇas* and gurus, then may Kṛṣṇa come and take my hand, and not Damaghoṣa's son or anyone else.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"But your desire can only be fulfilled by pious acts." For many births in the past she has undergone acts for this purpose. In great distress she places this information in her message.

The word *ādibhiḥ* indicates direct processes like hearing. The order is in terms of successively superior acts, ending with the worship of guru. Bhagavān means Nārāyaṇa. These acts should be sufficient (*alam*). If I have worshipped by these methods sufficiently then Kṛṣṇa should come and accept my hand. "This is difficult to accomplish. How can it be done?" You are able to do, not do or change otherwise anything (*pareśa*). She speaks of the Lord and Kṛṣṇa as separate entities because of identifying with his sweet human pastimes. Or the words *bhagavān* and *gadāgrajaḥ* can both refer to Kṛṣṇa. No other person—human, *devatā* or *aṁśa* of the Lord should accept me. She mentions Śiśupāla first, since this arrangement has already been made. By using a sentence with *yadi* (if), she indicates certainty of the marriage with Kṛṣṇa.

Text 52.41

śvo bhāvini tvam ajitodvahane vidarbhān
guptaḥ sametya pṛtanā-patibhiḥ parītaḥ
nirmathya caidya-magadhendra-balaṁ prasahya
māṁ rākṣasena vidhinodvaha vīrya-śulkām

O unconquerable one, tomorrow when my marriage ceremony is about to begin, you should arrive unseen in Vidarbha and surround yourself with the leaders of your army. Then crush the forces of Caidya and Magadhendra and marry me in the Rākṣasa style, winning me with your valor.

COMMENTARY: Enter within the city (*sametya*), surrounded by leaders of troops like Balarāma. There should be many leaders of troops. Since you are unconquerable (*ajita*), you should think of friends in danger. Agitate the enemy troops constantly or destroy them completely (*nirmathya*). Jarāsandha's army should be destroyed because it assists Śiśupāla. The word *nirmathya* (churn) suggests that the armies are unlimited like the

ocean. Moreover, just as previously the ocean was churned, and you delivered me, now also deliver me from the inner city with its ocean of Śiśupāla's army. In *rākṣasa* marriage there is no consideration of asking for the bride or qualification for marrying the bride.

Or "Why do you encourage me to engage in a great battle?" You are famous at all times and places for victory. O unconquerable one!

Text 52.42

antaḥ-purāntara-carīm anihatya bandhūn
tvām udvahe katham iti pravadāmy upāyam
pūrve-dyur asti mahatī kula-deva-yātrā
yasyāṁ bahir nava-vadhūr girijām upeyāt

Since I will be staying within the inner chambers of the palace, you may wonder, "How can I carry you away without killing some of your relatives?" But I shall tell you a way: On the day before the marriage there is a grand procession to honor the royal family's deity, and in this procession the new bride goes outside the city to visit Goddess Girijā.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In great distress she further describes the events of the coming day and gives instructions. I stay within the inner chambers of the palace. There will be a procession to the temple of the family deity, tomorrow, the day before the marriage. She states that this will definitely happen. "At which moment will this happen? How would I know?" It will be very evident because there will be a huge festival (*mahatī*) with instrumental music. It is a custom that the new bride enters the temple of Durgā outside the city.

Text 52.43

yasyāṅghri-paṅkaja-rajaḥ-snapanaṁ mahānto
vāñchanty umā-patir ivātma-tamo-'pahatyai
yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādaṁ
jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śata-janmabhiḥ syāt

O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Śiva hanker to bathe in the dust of your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain your

mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain your mercy.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Great persons bathe in the dust of your feet. This suggests a great *tīrtha* like Gaṅgā in which people bathe. Or *snapanam* can indicate sprinkling the dust on their bodies. Great persons like Brahmā take this dust to destroy at the root (*apahatyai*) their ignorance. The example of Śiva is given. He is famous for holding Gaṅgā on his head, desiring to cleanse himself of contamination. He is the controlling deity of ignorance and removes that ignorance by bathing in the Gaṅgā. Just as Umā in another birth married Śiva, a great *ātmārāma*, you should marry me. Because of your supreme position, you should be my husband and no one else. And you should do this because of your supreme beauty. O lotus-eyed Lord! *Yasya* should correspond to *tasya* in the main clause but instead *bhavat* is used for metrical reasons.

If I do not attain your mercy in the form of accepting me as your wife, then I will give up (*jahyām*) my life. The potential form of the verb is used to suggest cause (giving up life and attaining his mercy.) *Hetu-hetumator liṅ*: the potential form is used to denote cause and effect. (Pāṇini 3.3.156) There is a great possibility of this happening because of the great pain of love. The method of giving up life is starving the body through vows. I will die in grief for hundreds of births in order to get your mercy. Or, doing vows to attain you, my body will become naturally thin. The life airs will leave on their own on not attaining your mercy. It will be easy to give up my life. Since it is so easy to do, I will do this for hundreds of lives. *Vrata-kṛśa* is an alternate version. "Hundreds of births" indicates an indefinite number. This is a statement she makes by absorption in human pastimes.

Or "You are not qualified to be my wife. How can I marry you?" That is true since you are rarely attained even by Brahmā and others. I am only a daughter of a kṣatriya. But I will try to attain you by giving up my life for many births. She then speaks this verse. Though great persons desire your foot dust, even today they do not attain it. I shall give up my life by

austerities for many births. It is possible I will attain your mercy after hundreds of births. “Why will you do this?” You cause great pain because of your great beauty, O lotus-eyed lord!

Or, “I am suffering separation from the gopīs within. I cannot marry you. Marry someone else who has great qualities and beauty.” Seeing no other way, she decides to undergo great austerities up to even death and then he will change his mind out of compassion and fear of committing adharma of killing a woman. Then she speaks this verse.

Text 52.44

brāhmaṇa uvāca
ity ete guhya-sandeśā yadu-deva mayāhṛtāḥ
vimṛśya kartuṁ yac cātra kriyatāṁ tad anantaram

The brāhmaṇa said: This is the confidential message I have brought with me, O Lord of the Yadus. Please consider what must be done in these circumstances, and do it at once.

COMMENTARY: The messenger shows great faith in and reverence for his message which is secret and written as a letter. You should also keep it secret. Otherwise it would cause her embarrassment among friends. I have brought or offered this message to you (*āhṛtāḥ*). But you have all power, O lord of the Yadus! You have appeared in the Yadu family to manifest all your powers. Please consider this. He speaks with humility in order that Kṛṣṇa will immediately act. Or you should consider how and when you will go there most quickly. Act quickly (*anantaram*).

“The time for the marriage is very soon. How is it possible to go there from far off so quickly? How can the Yadus go?” You are lord of the Yadus. You are directly the Lord, and your devotees, the Yadus, have all power. They never disagree with your actions. You do not depend on their advice since you are their Lord. For this purpose, I have come from Vidarbha. To fulfill her desire, I have supplied everything you asked about dharma. This is the answer to all the Lord’s questions. Or depending only on the message, it is best not to answer the questions. Thus the messenger did not answer the particular questions.

[1] This is the peak of Gomanta Mountain.

Chapter Fifty-three
Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmiṇī

Text 53.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
vaidarbhyāḥ sa tu sandeśaṁ niśamya yadu-nandanaḥ
pragṛhya pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prahasann idam abravīt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus hearing the confidential message of Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa, giving joy to the Yadus, took the *brāhmaṇa's* hand and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *tu* indicates a different topic: Kṛṣṇa's reaction to the message. He took the *brāhmaṇa's* hand in a remarkable way (*pra-gṛhya*)—with symptoms of *prema* such as hairs standing on end. He took the *brāhmaṇa's* hand to establish friendship and to show affection. He smiled remarkably (*pra-hasan*), with slight embarrassment and with joy. He would give joy to the Yadus by marrying her (*yadu-nandandaḥ*).

Text 53.2

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tathāham api tac-citto nidrāṁ ca na labhe niśi
vedāham rukmiṇā dveṣān mamodvāho nivāritaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: Just as Rukmiṇī's mind is fixed on me, my mind is fixed on her. I can't even sleep at night. I know that Rukmī, out of envy, has forbidden our marriage.

COMMENTARY: Just as her mind is fixed on me, my mind is fixed on her. I cannot even sleep (*ca* means *even*) at night, what to speak of enjoying other things. Or am I similar to her? No. My condition is more severe. I cannot even sleep, because I know Rukmī has forbidden our marriage completely. He has decided to marry her to Śiśupāla.

Text 53.3

tām ānayiṣya unmathya rājanyāpasadān mṛdhe
mat-parām anavadyāṅgīm edhaso 'gni-śikhām iva

She has dedicated herself exclusively to me, and her beauty is flawless. I will bring her here after thrashing those worthless kings in battle, just as one produces a blazing flame from firewood.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I have been waiting in order to understand her desires. Now I will bring her here. The brāhmaṇa said, "Until my coming here, you have ignored her however." No, I am attracted to her wonderful qualities. With this intention he describes her. She is dedicated to me (*mat-parām*). By that quality all qualities are achieved.

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ

The *devatās* constantly dwell with all good qualities in that person who has pure *bhakti* for the Lord. There are no good qualities in the non-devotee who chases after temporary material objects with a desire for material pleasure. SB 5.18.12

Previously she described his qualities and form. (SB 10.52.37) Her qualities and form are similar to that description. I will crush the royal misfits (*apasadān*). This shows his determination to protect her as stated. He calls them misfits since they had no shame, though constantly conquered and insulted, and they had not given up their foolishness. I will crush them in battle, not by making them disappear through *māyā.* This shows his prowess. Just as sacrificial fire is covered by wood, but shines forth by effort, so with effort I will deliver her. It is understood that he gave an elaborate message as an answer.

Text 53.4

śrī-śuka uvāca
udvāharkṣaṁ ca vijñāya rukmiṇyā madhusūdanaḥ
rathaḥ saṁyujyatām āśu dārukety āha sārathim

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of demons, also understood the exact lunar time for Rukmiṇī's wedding. Thus he told his driver, "Dāruka, make ready my chariot immediately."

COMMENTARY: He particularly understood (*vi-jñāya*) the constellation of the marriage, externally from the messenger and from astronomy, and internally because he was directly Nārāyaṇa (*madhusūdanaḥ*), who had great valor in killing the demon Madhu. Thus, though he went alone among a host of wicked kings, there was no need to worry. Make ready the chariot with all weapons and quickly. Rukmiṇī had written that he should come secretly. Thus Kṛṣṇa called to Dāruka alone to prepare the chariot. He would go with Dāruka only.

Text 53.5

sa cāśvaiḥ śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakaiḥ
yuktaṁ ratham upānīya tasthau prāñjalir agrataḥ

Dāruka brought the Lord's chariot, yoked with the horses named Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka. He then stood before Kṛṣṇa with his hands on his head.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *ca* indicates that the chariot appeared immediately. Sometimes *saibya* is seen instead of *śaibya*. The colors of the horses are described in *Padma Purāṇa.*

śaibyas tu śuka-patrābhaḥ sugrīvo hema-piṅgalaḥ
meghapuṣpas tu meghābhaḥ pāṇḍuro hi balāhakaḥ

Śaibya was green like a parrot's wings, Sugrīva yellow-gold, Meghapuṣpa the color of a cloud, and Balāhaka whitish.

The horses were yoked to the chariot called Sugrīva-puṣpaka. Dāruka brought the chariot near to Kṛṣṇa. He placed his hands on his head with devotion (*pra-añjaliḥ*).

Text 53.6

āruhya syandanaṁ śaurir dvijam āropya tūrṇa-gaiḥ
ānartād eka-rātreṇa vidarbhān agamad dhayaiḥ

Kṛṣṇa mounted his chariot and had the *brāhmaṇa* do likewise. Then the Lord's swift horses took them from the Ānarta district to Vidarbha in a single night.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa took the *brāhmaṇa* sent by Rukmiṇī with him because it was easier for the *brāhmaṇa* to go by this method, and he could take the message to her quickly to save her life. Though Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, because he wanted to display his powers, he acted as a warrior (*śauriḥ*). Moreover, because he was born in the dynasty of Śūra, he was naturally endowed with all powers. He used horses because they were swift. They also had a special power. Or though he was directly the Lord, he played the role of a human, acting like a warrior, taking birth in a *kṣatriya* family, using horses.

Text 53.7

rājā sa kuṇḍina-patiḥ putra-sneha-vaśānugaḥ
śiśupālāya svāṁ kanyāṁ dāsyan karmāṇy akārayat

King Bhīṣmaka, the master of Kuṇḍina, having succumbed to the sway of affection for his son, was about to give his daughter to Śiśupāla. The king saw to all the required preparations.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though the king was famous for being of good nature, he made arrangements through his servants and priests for the marriage of his daughter who was dependent on him, to Śiśupāla. The king followed his son's desire (*vaśa*) out of affection for him. This is clear from the text since it was stated that other members of the family wanted her marriage with Kṛṣṇa (SB 10.52.25) and his son hated Kṛṣṇa (verse 2). Out of affection, the king prepared for his son's death or his living in the forest.

Texts 53.8–9

puraṁ sammṛṣṭa-saṁsikta-mārga-rathyā-catuṣpatham
citra-dhvaja-patākābhis toraṇaiḥ samalaṅkṛtam

srag-gandha-mālyābharaṇair virajo-'mbara-bhūṣitaiḥ
juṣṭaṁ strī-puruṣaiḥ śrīmad-gṛhair aguru-dhūpitaiḥ

The king had the main avenues, commercial roads and intersections thoroughly cleaned and then sprinkled with water, and he also had the city decorated with triumphant archways and multicolored banners on poles. The men and women of the city, arrayed in spotless raiment and anointed with fragrant sandalwood paste, wore precious necklaces, flower garlands and jeweled ornaments, and their homes decorated with canopies were filled with the aroma of *aguru*.

COMMENTARY: The roads were cleansed of dust (*sammṛṣṭa*) and thoroughly sprinkled with fragrant water (*saṁsikta*). *Mārgas* are broad roads and *rathyas* are small roads. The arches were always ornamented, but now more than ever (*samalaṅkṛtam*). The cloth was free of all dust (*viraja* or *virajas*). The king made the city to be endowed with houses which were ornamented with canopies, *cāmaras,* mirrors, and festoons (*śrīmat*). The descriptive terms for the people can be applied to the houses as well. Or the city was endowed with houses freshly decorated by women invited for the wedding. Or he made the city beautiful (*śrīmat*) with houses.

Text 53.10

pitṝn devān samabhyarcya viprāṁś ca vidhi-van nṛpa
bhojayitvā yathā-nyāyaṁ vācayām āsa maṅgalam

O king, in accordance with prescribed rituals, Bhīṣmaka worshiped the forefathers, *devatās* and *brāhmaṇas,* feeding them all properly. Then he had the traditional mantras chanted for the well-being of the bride.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The king worshipped the *brāhmaṇas* and fed them according to the rules and had them chant auspicious prayers for his daughter (mentioned in the next verse) on the occasion of the wedding (*yathā-nyāyam*). The connection with the daughter must be made since that is the subject of the next verse, since the king did his actions for his daughter and the description in the next verse stands meaningless on its own without a verb.

Text 53.11

su-snātāṁ su-datīṁ kanyāṁ kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalām
āhatāṁśuka-yugmena bhūṣitāṁ bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ

The bride cleaned her teeth and bathed, after which she put on the auspicious wedding necklace. Then she was dressed in brand-new upper and lower garments and adorned with most excellent jeweled ornaments.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Her teeth were whitened, taking away the betel nut stains, revealing natural whiteness. *Āhata* means cloth which has been freshly taken from the loom since that is auspicious. Another version has *ahata* with the same meaning. This sentence can also have its verb in the next sentence (*cakruḥ*).

Text 53.12

cakruḥ sāma-rg-yajur-mantrair vadhvā rakṣāṁ dvijottamāḥ
purohito 'tharva-vid vai juhāva graha-śāntaye

The best of *brāhmaṇas* chanted mantras of the Ṛg, Sāma and Yajur Vedas for the bride's protection, and a famous priest learned in the Atharva Veda offered oblations to pacify the controlling planets.

COMMENTARY: The *brāhmaṇas* were different from the priest who chanted the Atharva Veda. *Vai* indicates the distinction.

Text 53.13

hiraṇya-rūpya vāsāṁsi tilāṁś ca guḍa-miśritān
prādād dhenūś ca viprebhyo rājā vidhi-vidāṁ varaḥ

Outstanding in his knowledge of regulative principles, the king rewarded the *brāhmaṇas* with gold, silver, clothing, cows and sesame seeds mixed with raw sugar.

COMMENTARY: He gave with faith, with suitable *dakṣiṇa,* while washing their feet *(prādāt*), since he was the best of followers of rules (*vidhi-vidām varaḥ)*.

Text 53.14

evaṁ cedi-patī rājā damaghoṣaḥ sutāya vai
kārayām āsa mantra-jñaiḥ sarvam abhyudayocitam

Damaghoṣa, lord of Cedi, had also engaged *brāhmaṇas* expert in chanting mantras to perform all rituals necessary to assure his son's prosperity.

COMMENTARY: Just like Bhīṣmaka (*evam*), the king of Cedi (Śiśupāla's father) engaged *brāhmaṇas. Vai* means famous. This indicates they were similar.

Text 53.15

mada-cyudbhir gajānīkaiḥ syandanair hema-mālibhiḥ
patty-aśva-saṅkulaiḥ sainyaiḥ parītaḥ kuṇḍīnaṁ yayau

King Damaghoṣa traveled to Kuṇḍina accompanied by armies of elephants exuding *mada*, chariots hung with golden chains, and numerous cavalry and infantry soldiers.

COMMENTARY: The father is further described. He travelled with many elephants.

Text 53.16

taṁ vai vidarbhādhipatiḥ samabhyetyābhipūjya ca
niveśayām āsa mudā kalpitānya-niveśane

Bhīṣmaka, the lord of Vidarbha, came out of the city dutifully and met King Damaghoṣa, offering him tokens of respect. Bhīṣmaka then settled Damaghoṣa in a residence especially constructed for the occasion.

COMMENTARY: *Vidarbhādhipati* can refer to Bhīṣmaka or Rukmī. He approached facing Damaghoṣa, having music play even from far off and worshipped him. The word *vai* indicates the certainty of the marriage. Thus the welcome is elaborately described. This was done to fool the father and son in front of the Lord. It shows Bhīṣmaka's glory and boldness.

Text 53.17

tatra śālvo jarāsandho dantavakro vidūrathaḥ
ājagmuś caidya-pakṣīyāḥ pauṇḍrakādyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

Śiśupāla's supporters—Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and Vidūratha—all came, along with Pauṇḍraka and thousands of other kings.

COMMENTARY: They came to Kuṇḍina (*tatra*). "Others" means the king of Kāśī and others.

Texts 53.18–19

kṛṣṇa-rāma-dviṣo yattāḥ kanyāṁ caidyāya sādhitum
yady āgatya haret kṛṣno rāmādyair yadubhir vṛtaḥ
yotsyāmaḥ saṁhatās tena iti niścita-mānasāḥ
ājagmur bhū-bhujaḥ sarve samagra-bala-vāhanāḥ

To secure the bride for Śiśupāla, the kings who envied Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to the following decision among themselves: "If Kṛṣṇa comes here with Balarāma and the other Yadus to steal the bride, we shall band together and fight him." Thus those envious kings went to the wedding with their entire armies and a full complement of military conveyances.

COMMENTARY: The reason the kings sided with Śiśupāla was that they hated Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They prepared. The kings came with the full strength of their armies and conveyances. Though their conveyances are included in mentioning the full strength of the armies, they are mentioned separately to indicate that a multitude of warriors came with their conveyances. Instead of *samagra* sometimes *samartha* (capable) is seen.

Texts 53.20–21

śrutvaitad bhagavān rāmo vipakṣīya nṛpodyamam
kṛṣṇaṁ caikaṁ gataṁ hartuṁ kanyāṁ kalaha-śaṅkitaḥ
balena mahatā sārdhaṁ bhrātṛ-sneha-pariplutaḥ
tvaritaḥ kuṇḍinaṁ prāgād gajāśva-ratha-pattibhiḥ

When Balarāma heard about these preparations of the inimical kings and how Kṛṣṇa had set off alone to steal the bride, he feared that a fight would ensue. Immersed in affection for his brother, he hurried to Kuṇḍina with a mighty army consisting of infantry and of soldiers riding on elephants, horses and chariots.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma was endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*). Thus he went with a great army (*balena mahatā*), aroused with great energy (*prāgāt*). Why? He feared a battle between Kṛṣṇa and the enemies. Or he was afraid that a quarrel would occur. Why would he be frightened, since he was by nature fearless and knew of Kṛṣṇa's powers? He was absorbed in complete affection for his brother. His affection was without limit like the ocean. The word "brother" is used to indicate that his knowledge of Kṛṣṇa as the Lord disappeared, and he was aware of him only as a brother. Mention of elephants indicates that the four parts of the army were all present. He went quickly, almost with Kṛṣṇa, who had left previously in the morning. Later it is mentioned that Bhīṣmaka welcomed them both at the same time.

Text 53.22

bhīṣma-kanyā varārohā kāṅkṣanty āgamanaṁ hareḥ
pratyāpattim apaśyantī dvijasyācintayat tadā

The lovely daughter of Bhīṣmaka, with beautiful hips, anxiously awaited the arrival of Kṛṣṇa, but when she did not see the *brāhmaṇa* return she thought as follows.

COMMENTARY: After describing Kṛṣṇa's preparations for abducting her, five and a half verses (23-28) describe Rukmiṇī's *bhāva*. She had the best hips. This indicates her great beauty. She constantly desired the coming of Kṛṣṇa who stole her mind and would take her away (*hareḥ*). Not seeing the return of the messenger who would speak of Kṛṣṇa coming, she began to worry in the early morning (*tadā*). Being the daughter of Bhīṣmaka, she was anxious that Kṛṣṇa come and abduct her.

Text 53.23

aho tri-yāmāntarita udvāho me 'lpa-rādhasaḥ
nāgacchaty aravindākṣo nāhaṁ vedmy atra kāraṇam
so 'pi nāvartate 'dyāpi mat-sandeśa-haro dvijaḥ

[Princess Rukmiṇī thought:] Alas, my wedding is to take place when the night ends! How unlucky I am! Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa does not come. I don't know why. And even the *brāhmaṇa* messenger has not yet returned.

COMMENTARY: Oh (*aho*)! She laments. She is most unfortunate because Kṛṣṇa delays in coming. He does not come. The present tense is used to express the past to indicate that he must come. His lotus eyes destroy all suffering. I do not understand the reason why he has not come since he is endowed with all powers and he is affectionate to his devotees. Because he is completely independent, he will not come. Why would the *brāhmaṇa* return?

Text 53.24

api mayy anavadyātmā dṛṣṭvā kiñcij jugupsitam
mat-pāṇi-grahaṇe nūnaṁ nāyāti hi kṛtodyamaḥ

Perhaps the faultless Lord, even while preparing to come here, saw something contemptible in me and therefore has not come to take my hand.

COMMENTARY: In great pain, she imagines another reason for the Lord and the *brāhmaṇa* not coming. The Lord has a most beautiful body, or is faultless in character. For certain (*nūnam*) he will not come to take my hand, though he made an effort to come here (*api*). Or perhaps (*nūnam*), though he is without faults like hard-heartedness, he has seen something faulty in me, since (*hi*) he has not come. Thus the brāhmaṇa wants to die (*kṛtodyamaḥ*). That is not stated directly since it is inauspicious.

Text 53.25

durbhagāyā na me dhātā nānukūlo maheśvaraḥ
devī vā vimukhī gaurī rudrāṇī girijā satī

I am extremely unfortunate, for the creator is not favorably disposed toward me, nor is the great Śiva. Or perhaps Śiva's wife, Devī, who is known as Gaurī, Rudrāṇī, Girijā and Satī, has turned against me.

COMMENTARY: I am most unfortunate because the Lord and Śiva do not favor me. They have the power to remove obstacles. Devī is our family deity. She is golden but previously was black. By undergoing great austerities, she became golden. She is fully devoted to Śiva. Or as Rudrāṇī she is pure, devoid of faults like hardness. She knows the pain that a girl undergoes to obtain a husband. She had two births. She was born from the

mountain (*girijā*). Another version has *girīśā.* Being similar to Śiva, she is affectionate to the devotees. As Satī she has all good qualities. Rukmiṇī cried profusely, since later it is said that she was overcome with tears (*aśru-kalākule)*.

Text 53.26

evaṁ cintayatī bālā govinda-hṛta-mānasā
nyamīlayata kāla-jñā netre cāśru-kalākule

As she thought in this way, the young maiden, whose mind had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, closed her tear-filled eyes, remembering that there was still time.

COMMENTARY: Her mind was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the Lord who appeared on earth to display his unlimited powers (*govinda*). Though she was a young girl (*bālāḥ*), she thought in this way only, full of lamentation. Her eyes were full of drops of tears or a torrent of tears. She closed her eyes to stop the tears from falling because of great pain. Or though she knew there was still time, she closed her eyes in great pain. This means she fainted. Or desiring to close her eyes, she desired to die. It is later mentioned:

dūtas tvayātma-labhane su-vivikta-mantraḥ
prasthāpito mayi cirāyati śūnyam etat
matvā jihāsa idaṁ aṅgam ananya-yogyaṁ
tiṣṭheta tat tvayi vayaṁ pratinandayāmaḥ

When you sent the messenger with your most confidential plan and yet I delayed going to you, you began to see the whole world as void and wanted to quit your body, which could never have been given to anyone but me. May this greatness of yours remain with you always; I can do nothing to reciprocate except joyfully thank you for your devotion. SB 10.60.57

Text 53.27

evaṁ vadhvāḥ pratīkṣantyā govindāgamanaṁ nṛpa
vāma ūrur bhujo netram asphuran priya-bhāṣiṇaḥ

O king, as the bride thus awaited the arrival of Govinda, she felt a twitch in her left thigh, arm and eye. This was a sign that something desirable

would happen.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Rukmiṇī, whose marriage was approaching (*vadhvaḥ*), was awaiting the arrival of Kṛṣṇa. Her left, thigh, arm and eye twitched. The limbs are mentioned from lower to higher in position, but they simultaneously began to quiver. The verb is the subject of each noun. *Priya-bhāṣinaḥ* should be in the neuter to agree with *netram,* but is in the masculine as poetic license.

Text 53.28

atha kṛṣṇa-vinirdiṣṭaḥ sa eva dvija-sattamaḥ
antaḥpura-carīṁ devīṁ rāja-putrīm dadarśa ha

Just then the purest of learned *brāhmaṇas,* following Kṛṣṇa's order, came to see Rukmiṇī, shining with ornaments, within the inner chambers of the palace.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *brāhmaṇa* had been ordered by Kṛṣṇa, and no one else, since he was qualified. "Tell her that she has attained me. I will take her away." First the *brāhmaṇa* saw her. She did not see him first, because she was moving about here and there with restless heart within the palace to see if the *brāhmaṇa* had come. She was shining with the ornaments for marriage (*devīm*). *Ha* indicates joy. He was wondering while coming whether he would be able to see Rukmiṇī or not, since Rukmī was so cunning. Therefore he was joyous when he saw her.

Text 53.29

sā taṁ prahṛṣṭa-vadanam avyagrātma-gatiṁ satī
ālakṣya lakṣaṇābhijñā samapṛcchac chuci-smitā

Noting the *brāhmaṇa's* joyful face and serene movements, saintly Rukmiṇī, who could expertly interpret such symptoms, inquired from him with a pure smile.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

She smiled out of joy since she knew the symptoms of good news, since she was endowed to the highest degree with all good qualities (*satī*). She questioned him completely with respect, asking how he was, etc. She asked the *brāhmaṇa* who was moving serenely with a joyous face. Or she, with serenity (*avyagrā*), asked him thoroughly about Kṛṣṇa who was her shelter (*ātma-gatim*). Where is he? What did he say?

Text 53.30

tasyā āvedayat prāptaṁ śaśaṁsa yadu-nandanam
uktaṁ ca satya-vacanam ātmopanayanaṁ prati

The *brāhmaṇa* announced to her the arrival of Yadunandana and relayed the Lord's promise to marry her.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa who gives joy to the Yadus indicates that all the Yadus also came. The Lord had promised (*satya-vacanam*) to take her. The *brāhmaṇa* announced what he said to (*prati*) Kṛṣṇa (*yadu-nandanam*) and Kṛṣṇa's promise to take her close to him (*upanayanam*).

Text 53.31

tam āgataṁ samājñāya vaidarbhī hṛṣṭa-mānasā
na paśyantī brāhmaṇāya priyam anyan nanāma sā

Princess Vaidarbhī was overjoyed to learn of Kṛṣṇa's arrival. Not finding anything at hand suitable to offer the *brāhmaṇa*, she simply bowed down to him.

COMMENTARY: She knew of Kṛṣṇa's arrival, confirming it by various signs (*sam-ājñāya*). She who was directly Lakṣmī (*sā*), surrendered to Kṛṣṇa alone, who was born in a suitable place called Vidarbha, known from scriptures as the place where the wife of Kṛṣṇa would be born as the daughter of the king.

She did not see anything suitable to offer to the *brāhmaṇa,* except bowing down. Or she did not see anything except her beloved to be attained. He was pleased without material objects (*anyat*), satisfied with attaining the Lord. Or seeing something indescribably dear, better that anything

material, she did not bow down. For the person who desires *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, love is not accomplished simply by bowing down. The person must offer *prema*. She *(sā*) was famous as capable of offering *bhakti* to the Lord. She was famous as dearest to the Lord. She appeared in Vidarbha to manifest her unlimited powers similar to Kṛṣṇa's.

Text 53.32

prāptau śrutvā sva-duhitur udvāha-prekṣaṇotsukau
abhyayāt tūrya-ghoṣeṇa rāma-kṛṣṇau samarhaṇaiḥ

The king, upon hearing that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had come and were eager to witness his daughter's wedding, went forth with abundant offerings to greet them as music resounded.

COMMENTARY: The king heard that the two had come into the city. They were eager to see the marriage directly. They were perceived to be coming to confirm the marriage of their maternal cousin. Thus Kṛṣṇa came first, alone. If he came with the Yadus, there would be a worry that he came to steal the bride. The king would arrange to have the bride protected. Rukmī and the army would not allow her to go to the temple. Thus, Rukmiṇī had instructed him to come secretly (verse 10.52.41).

However they did not come for the wedding. He had come quickly out of great affection, with Balarāma, and both were welcomed by the king. According to the message, Kṛṣṇa should come first secretly, but he did not.

Though he felt himself unqualified, the king felt himself fortunate that the two had come to see the wedding of his daughter. He was overjoyed that they came to see his (*sva)* daughter's marriage. He felt internally that Kṛṣṇa should take her. Though Kṛṣṇa arrived first, Balarāma is mentioned first, since he was older. Bhīṣmaka worshipped them with the best items.

Text 53.33

madhu-parkam upānīya vāsāṁsi virajāṁsi saḥ
upāyanāny abhīṣṭāni vidhi-vat samapūjayat

Presenting them with *madhuparka*, new clothing and other desirable gifts, he worshiped them according to standard rituals.

COMMENTARY: Having indicated the items, Śukadeva now describes how they were used. He brought the *madhuparka* near or offered it with a service attitude as a gift. He also offered items dear to them or himself such as elephants, horses, and jewels. He worshipped them in a special way (*sam*) or as his son-in-laws.

Text 53.34

tayor niveśanaṁ śrīmad upākalpya mahā-matiḥ
sa-sainyayoḥ sānugayor ātithyaṁ vidadhe yathā

Generous King Bhīṣmaka arranged opulent accommodations for the two Lords, and also for their army and entourage. In this way he afforded them proper hospitality.

COMMENTARY: He offered accommodation with food, drinks, cloth, and ornaments (*śrīmat*) or palaces with crystal pillars and unlimited beauty. He made special palaces for them and offered them as their servant or accepting them as his masters, or with all hospitality (*sam*). The followers were Gada, Sātyaki, Uddhava and others. The four parts of the army were also there. He offered properly, with great devotion (*yathā*), with beds, water, food, milk products and butter.

Text 53.35

evaṁ rājñāṁ sametānāṁ yathā-vīryaṁ yathā-vayaḥ
yathā-balaṁ yathā-vittaṁ sarvaiḥ kāmaiḥ samarhayat

Bhīṣmaka gave all desirable things to the kings who had assembled for the occasion, honoring them as befitted their political power, age, their armies and wealth.

COMMENTARY: He offered valuables to the kings who had gathered to see the wedding (*evam*), along with their armies or all together (*sam-etānām*), according to their strength (*vīryam*) and their armies (*balam*). Those who had more power and armies received more goods. He worshipped all to satisfy their minds fully. In the list of strength, age, armies and wealth the former are greater causes for worship.

Text 53.36

kṛṣṇam āgatam ākarṇya vidarbha-pura-vāsinaḥ
āgatya netrāñjalibhiḥ papus tan-mukha-paṅkajam

When the residents of Vidarbha heard that Kṛṣṇa had come, they all went to see him. With the cupped palms of their eyes they drank the honey of his lotus face.

COMMENTARY: The citizens of Vidarbha, men and women, heard that Kṛṣṇa, who attracts all hearts or who is the form of the highest bliss (*bhagavān*), had come. They gathered near him and drank the sweet beauty of his face, just as a bee drinks the nectar from the lotus out of attachment. They looked for a long time with absorption.

Text 53.37

asyaiva bhāryā bhavituṁ rukmiṇy arhati nāparā
asāv apy anavadyātmā bhaiṣmyāḥ samucitaḥ patiḥ

[The people of the city said:] Rukmiṇī, and no one else, deserves to become his wife, and he also, possessing such flawless beauty, is the only suitable husband for Princess Rukmiṇī.

COMMENTARY: The two are most suitable for each other. The word *eva* should be understood for both parties. The reason is that he and she are flawless (*anavadyātmā*). They desired the marriage of the two, offering their unlimited piety with devotion.

Text 53.38

kiñcit su-caritaṁ yan nas tena tuṣṭas tri-loka-kṛt
anugṛhṇātu gṛhṇātu vaidarbhyāḥ pāṇim acyutaḥ

May Acyuta, the creator of the three worlds, be satisfied with whatever pious acts we may have done and show his mercy by taking the hand of Vaidarbhī.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

May the creator of the three worlds, he who can do anything, and who is merciful by creating the world so that we can live, be satisfied with

whatever pious acts we have done in previous lives.

He is fixed in beauty and qualities (*acyutaḥ*). They use the word *vaidarbhyāḥ* (she who is from Vidarbha) to indicate that they as residents of Vidarbha have a relationship with her. Because their hearts are overcome with the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's human pastimes, they use differing words to describe him (*tri-loka-kṛt* and *acyutaḥ*). They also indicate his extraordinary nature.

Text 53.39

evaṁ prema-kalā-baddhā vadanti sma puraukasaḥ
kanyā cāntaḥ-purāt prāgād bhaṭair guptāmbikālayam

Bound by their swelling love, the city's residents spoke in this way. Then the bride, protected by guards, left the inner palace to visit the temple of Ambikā.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The residents spoke among themselves continually in this manner. They were not afraid of Rukmī because they were bound by the effects of *prema. Kalā* means "producing." Or they were bound by a particle (*kalā*) of *prema* which was pleasing to them. That *prema* was suitable for friendly emotions to the Lord and was exalted. They were bound up tightly by that particle of love. What then to speak of Rukmiṇī and other women? The word *ca* indicates that Rukmiṇī was aware of what the people spoke. Just as they had *prema* for her, she experienced *prema* for them. She also took their speech as an auspicious sign and therefore in joy entered (*pra-agāt*) the Durgā temple.

Texts 53.40–41

padbhyāṁ viniryayau draṣṭuṁ bhavānyāḥ pāda-pallavam
sā cānudhyāyatī samyaṅ mukunda-caraṇāmbujam
yata-vāṅ mātṛbhiḥ sārdhaṁ sakhībhiḥ parivāritā
guptā rāja-bhaṭaiḥ śraiḥ sannaddhair udyatāyudhaiḥ
mṛḍaṅga-śaṅkha-paṇavās tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire

Rukmiṇī silently went out on foot to see the lotus feet of the deity Bhavānī. Accompanied by her mothers and girlfriends and protected by the King's valiant soldiers, who held their upraised weapons at the ready, she simply absorbed her mind in the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. And all the while *mṛdaṅgas,* conch shells, *paṇavas,* horns and other instruments resounded.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The details are described in four verses (40-43). She (*sāḥ*), who was endowed with such greatness, went on foot, out of respect, because she was going to see Durgā's lotus feet. Durgā's feet are described as lotuses because of Rukmiṇī's devotion. "If Rukmiṇī is directly Lakṣmī, why does she have devotion to Durgā?" Actually, she was constantly meditating on the lotus feet of Mukunda, endowed completely (*samyak*) with sweetness, which revealed their softness and other qualities (like jasmine flowers). This indicates that neither she nor Kṛṣṇa revealed their greatness at this time. Because she was absorbed in devotion, she was silent. She also walked with devotion *(vi-niryayau*). Being surrounded by many people indicates that she would be hard to steal and was thus in great anxiety. This shows the seed of experiencing joy on suddenly attaining Kṛṣṇa, which is described later. She was surrounded by persons who had motherly affection (*mātṛbhiḥ*). She was surrounded by troops because Rukmī was afraid of Kṛṣṇa. They were brave, dressed in armor, and had their weapons raised. These were progressively better means of protecting her. *Mṛdaṅgas, paṇavas*, and *tūryas* are drums. *Bherīs* are wind instruments. Another type of *bherī* is a drum.

Texts 53.42–43

nānopahāra balibhir vāramukhyāḥ sahasraśaḥ
srag-gandha-vastrābharaṇair dvija-patnyaḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ
gāyantyaś ca stuvantaś ca gāyakā vādya-vādakāḥ
parivārya vadhūṁ jagmuḥ sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ

Behind the bride followed thousands of prominent courtesans bearing various offerings and presents, along with well-adorned *brāhmaṇas'* wives singing and reciting prayers and bearing gifts of garlands, scents,

clothing and jewelry. There were also professional singers, musicians, bards, chroniclers and heralds.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The best citizens came with various gifts and articles of worship (*balibhiḥ*). The singers sang and the *sūtas* and others praised (*stuvantaḥ*). The musicians played instruments (understood but not written in the text).

Text 53.44

āsādya devī-sadanaṁ dhauta-pāda-karāmbujā
upaspṛśya śuciḥ śāntā praviveśāmbikāntikam

Upon reaching the goddess's temple, Rukmiṇī first washed her lotus feet and hands and then sipped water for purification. Thus sanctified and peaceful, she came into the presence of mother Ambikā.

COMMENTARY: She reached the temple of Durgā (*devī-sadanam*). Another version has *devyāḥ. Śāntāḥ* means her mind was controlled.

Text 53.45

tāṁ vai pravayaso bālāṁ vidhi-jñā vipra-yoṣitaḥ
bhavānīṁ vandayāṁ cakrur bhava-patnīṁ bhavānvitām

The older wives of brāhmaṇas, expert in the knowledge of rituals, led young Rukmiṇī in offering respects to Bhavānī, wife of Śiva.

COMMENTARY: Bhavānī refers to Pārvatī. They had Rukmiṇī offer respects to *bhava-patnīm* (the wife of Śiva) with devotion (*bhavānvitām*). By offering respects to her, offering respects to Śiva was also accomplished. Or she worshipped her in order to gain similar chastity and good fortune.

Text 53.46

namasye tvāmbike 'bhīkṣṇaṁ sva-santāna-yutāṁ śivām
bhūyāt patir me bhagavān kṛṣṇas tad anumodatām

[Princess Rukmiṇī prayed:] O mother Ambikā, wife of Lord Siva, I repeatedly offer my obeisances unto you, together with your children. May Kṛṣṇa become my husband! Please grant this!

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse is the mantra for offering respects to Durgā. O mother of the universe (*ambike*)! She is called Śivā since she is non-different from Śiva, having similar qualities and name. Therefore she offers respects to Durgā along with Śiva. After indicating Durgā's qualification of being like Śiva, she makes her request. May the Lord who is endowed with all unparalleled sweetness and powers (*bhagavān*) and who attracts the minds of everyone (*kṛṣṇaḥ*), what to speak of those who are dedicated to him, be my husband. You two should permit this since you can fulfill desires. Or, may Kṛṣṇa permit it. In great longing, she forgets about Durgā.

Texts 53.47–48

adbhir gandhākṣatair dhūpair vāsaḥ-sraṅ-mālya-bhūṣaṇaiḥ
nānopahāra-balibhiḥ pradīpāvalibhiḥ pṛthak
vipra-striyaḥ patimatīs tathā taiḥ samapūjayat
lavaṇāpūpa-tāmbūla-kaṇṭha-sūtra-phalekṣubhiḥ

Rukmiṇī worshiped the goddess with water, scents, whole grains, incense, clothing, garlands, necklaces, jewelry and other prescribed offerings and gifts, and also with arrays of lamps. The married *brāhmaṇa* women each performed worship simultaneously with the same items, also offering savories and cakes, prepared betel nut, sacred threads, fruit and sugar-cane juice.

COMMENTARY: The articles are not listed in order because Śukadeva or Rukmiṇī forgot the order, because of being absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. *Sraja* are garlands made of flowers. *Mālya* are flowers made into other ornaments. The *brāhmaṇa* women had separate items of worship. She performed worship completely (*sampūjaya*t), using food (*upahāra*) and offerings to the directions (*balibhiḥ*). In the end, lamps were offered. Each was offered fully. At this time, she was dependent on these women who were married (*patimatī*). Women with husbands offered salt (*lavana*) and other items according to the custom in order that *rasa* is attained.

Text 53.49

tasyai striyas tāḥ pradaduḥ śeṣāṁ yuyujur āśiṣaḥ
tābhyo devyai namaś cakre śeṣāṁ ca jagṛhe vadhūḥ

The ladies gave the bride the remnants of the offerings and then blessed her. She in turn bowed down to them and the deity and accepted the remnants as *prasādam.*

COMMENTARY: The women gave her the remnants with joy and respect. She bowed to them and to Durgā. It is forbidden to accept the remnants from the *devatās*, but there is no fault for an unmarried girl to do so (*vadhūḥ*).

Text 53.50

muni-vratam atha tyaktvā niścakrāmāmbikā-gṛhāt
pragṛhya pāṇinā bhṛtyāṁ ratna-mudropaśobhinā

The princess then gave up her vow of silence and left the Ambikā temple, holding on to a friend with her hand, which was adorned with a jeweled ring.

COMMENTARY: She held the hand of a friend firmly with affection (*pragṛhya*), expecting her to point out Kṛṣṇa. Or fearing she would fall down, out of control on expecting to see Kṛṣṇa, she held her friend's hand. Actually she did so to show special beauty. In verse 54 it is said, "On the pretext of the procession, Rukmiṇī displayed her beauty for Kṛṣṇa alone." The ring enhanced her hand's beauty (*upaśobhinā*) at the time of the wedding. This indicates that her hand was most beautiful.

Texts 53.51–55

tāṁ deva-māyām iva dhīra-mohinīṁ
su-madhyamāṁ kuṇḍala-maṇḍitānanām
śyāmāṁ nitambārpita-ratna-mekhalāṁ
vyañjat-stanīṁ kuntala-śaṅkitekṣaṇām
śuci-smitāṁ bimba-phalādhara-dyuti-
śoṇāyamāna-dvija-kunda-kuḍmalām
padā calantīṁ kala-haṁsa-gāminīṁ
siñjat-kalā-nūpura-dhāma-śobhinā
vilokya vīrā mumuhuḥ samāgatā
yaśasvinas tat-kṛta-hṛc-chayārditāḥ

yāṁ vīkṣya te nṛpatayas tad udāra-hāsa-
vrīdāvaloka-hṛta-cetasa ujjhitāstrāḥ
petuḥ kṣitau gaja-rathāśva-gatā vimūḍhā
yātrā-cchalena haraye 'rpayatīṁ sva-śobhām
saivaṁ śanaiś calayatī cala-padma-kośau
prāptiṁ tadā bhagavataḥ prasamīkṣamāṇā
utsārya vāma-karajair alakān apaṅgaiḥ
prāptān hriyaikṣata nṛpān dadṛśe 'cyutaṁ ca
tāṁ rāja-kanyāṁ ratham ārurakṣatīṁ
jahāra kṛṣṇo dviṣatāṁ samīkṣatām

Rukmiṇī appeared as enchanting as the Lord's illusory potency, which enchants even the sober and grave. Thus the kings gazed upon her virgin beauty, her shapely waist, and her lovely face adorned with earrings. Her hips were graced with a jewel-studded belt, her breasts were just budding, and her eyes seemed apprehensive of her encroaching locks of hair. She smiled sweetly, her jasmine-bud teeth reflecting the glow of her bimba-red lips. As she walked with the motions of a royal swan, the effulgence of her tinkling ankle bells beautified her feet. Seeing her, the assembled heroes were totally bewildered. Lust tore at their hearts. Indeed, when the kings saw her broad smile and shy glance, they became stupefied, dropped their weapons and fell unconscious to the ground from their elephants, chariots and horses. On the pretext of the procession, Rukmiṇī displayed her beauty for Kṛṣṇa alone. Slowly she advanced the two moving lotus-whorls of her feet, awaiting the arrival of the Supreme Lord. With the fingernails of her left hand she pushed some strands of hair away from her face and shyly looked from the corners of her eyes at the kings standing before her. At that moment she saw Kṛṣṇa. Then, while his enemies looked on, the Lord seized the princess, who was eager to mount his chariot.

COMMENTARY: She was like the *māyā* of Viṣṇu (*deva*) since she was most beautiful, similar to Mohinī. O *vīra* (warrior) or *dhīra* (intelligent person)! The details of her beauty are then described with ten descriptive terms. Not only her waist was attractive (*sumadhyama*) but all limbs were attractive. *Hari-vaṁśa* describes this.

śyāmāvadātā sā hy āsīt pṛthucārvāyatekṣaṇā
tāmroṣṭha-nayanāpāṅī pīnoru-jaghanastanī
vṛhatī cārusarvāṅī tanvīśacīnibhānanā
tāmra-tuṅganahī subhrur nīlakuñcita-mūrdhajā
atyarthām rūpataḥ kāntā pīna-=śroṇipayodharā
tīkṣṇa-śuklaiḥ samair dantaiḥ prabhāsadbhir alaṅkṛtā
sananyā pramadā loke rūpeṇa yaśasā śriyā
rūpiṇī rukmiṇī devī pāṇdura- ksaumavāsinī

She was pure and dark. Her eyes were long and wide. Her lips were red. She glanced with her eyes. Her thighs were firm and ankles were narrow. Her limbs were large and her waist was narrow. Her face was like the moon. Her raised nails were red. Her brows and hair were black. She was beautiful because of her form. Her hips and breasts were full. She was ornamented with even, white, sharp, shining teeth. She was incomparable in this world by her beauty, fame and wealth. She wore pale yellow cloth.

She wore unlimited ornaments on her hips and ears. She was at *vayaḥ sandhi* (*śyāmām)*. Thus her breasts were budding (*vyañjat-stanīm*). Her limbs, beauty, age and ornaments are described in summary. Then her sweetness is described in verse 51. Her glance was sweet, showing through her locks of hair. Her smile was sweet. This revealed her teeth slightly. Her gait was sweet. Her ankle bells sounded like a swan, as she walked like a swan.

Directly seeing her, all the gathered warriors, though famous for defeating enemies, fainted in sorrow, because they had no hope of attaining her. They were frightened by her desire to have Kṛṣṇa (*tat-kṛta-hṛcchaya*). Though brave and mounted on elephants, they fell to the ground from fainting, dropping their weapons. Their hearts were destroyed by Kṛṣṇa's shy glance and best smile, endowed with love, directed to Rukmiṇī. They fainted because of agitation, understanding that he would steal her.

On the pretext of going to the temple, she offered or showed her extraordinary beauty to Kṛṣṇa alone. She actually went outside the palace so that Kṛṣṇa could take her. She did this by gently moving her feet. They were soft like lotus buds. The comparison with the lotus is to show their beauty. She moved slowly because of their beauty and because of their

softness. She waited to attain the Lord, endowed with all powers (*bhagavataḥ*). Or she was expecting with great desire (*pra*) to see him (*praptim*) with her eyes.

She pushed aside her locks in order to see the Lord clearly. This indicates her cleverness. She saw all the kings who had come (*prāptān*) to help Śiśupāla. Wanting to see Kṛṣṇa, she cast a shy glance everywhere. She did not look at the kings. She sent many glances in order to see everywhere. Or she looked at the kings who were received with shame, caused by her disrespect for them. Or pushing aside her locks which blocked her glances, while glancing here and there for the arrival of the Lord, she saw the kings who had fallen here and there. Later, by her glances, (*apāṅgaiḥ*) she saw Kṛṣṇa who has standing far away in order to fool the kings. Kṛṣṇa does not fail in his determination (*acyutam*) and never fails to show his form and qualities at any time.

She was eager to mount the chariot because she was a princess. She could not go to his house on foot. Or she could not go on foot because her feet were tender and she was unable to walk that far. Getting down from his chariot, he took her hand in his. Or he put her on his lap in the chariot, while the kings looked. They had recovered from fainting. The genitive case indicates a lack of respect for the kings. This act shows his boldness, his prowess and quickness. This could happen because he was Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān. Or he attracted all. He was most expert at directly taking her.

Text 53.56

rathaṁ samāropya suparṇa-lakṣaṇaṁ
rājanya-cakraṁ paribhūya mādhavaḥ
tato yayau rāma-purogamaḥ śanaiḥ
śṛgāla-madhyād iva bhāga-hṛd dhariḥ

Lifting the princess onto his chariot, whose flag bore the emblem of Garuḍa, Mādhava drove back the circle of kings. With Balarāma in the lead, he slowly exited, like a lion removing his prey from the midst of jackals.

COMMENTARY: He put her quickly and comfortably onto the chariot, into the seat (*sam-āropya*). The symbol of Garuḍa indicates defeat of others

and moving quickly. *Mādhava* means the husband of Lakṣmī, who was non-different from Rukmiṇī. Or it means he was born in the Madhu dynasty to manifest his unlimited powers. Defeating the kings, putting Balarāma in from, he slowly departed with the Yadus from that place (*tataḥ*), without fear. An example is given. The lion by force takes the meat (*bhāga-hṛṭ*), though surrounded by jackals.

Text 53.57

taṁ māninaḥ svābhibhavaṁ yaśaḥ-kṣayaṁ
pare jarāsandha-mukhā na sehire
aho dhig asmān yaśa ātta-dhanvanāṁ
gopair hṛtaṁ keśariṇāṁ mṛgair iva

The proud kings inimical to the Lord, headed by Jarāsandha, could not tolerate this humiliating defeat. They exclaimed, "Oh, damn us! Though we are mighty archers, mere cowherds have stolen our honor, just as puny animals might steal the honor of lions!"

COMMENTARY: Their defeat was criticized because Kṛṣṇa had directly taken away the bride. Because of this, their fame was destroyed, since they could not do anything or because their efforts to obtain a bride for Śiśupāla had failed. All the warriors other than the Yadus (*pare*) could not tolerate this defeat, because they were proud of their valor (*māninaḥ*). Or the enemies (*pare*), who were proud, could not tolerate their defeat. *Aho* indicates lamentation. "Though we had bows in our hands, our fame was stolen by cowherds who hold only sticks in their hands, who live in the forest and pay taxes. This is most improper." An example is given. The booty of the lions has been stolen by other animals. Or the fame in the prowess of great strength has been stolen when the small animals take the booty. They considered the Yadus who accompanied Kṛṣṇa to be cowherds. Thus, the plural is used (*gopaiḥ*). Another version has *asmad-yaṣa*, but this results in no relation to *ātta-dhanvanām.*

Śrīdhara Svāmī has explained the meaning to be *asmākam ātta-dhanvanām*, which is easy to understand (the fame of us who hold bows has been stolen).

Chapter Fifty-four
Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī

Text 54.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti sarve su-saṁrabdhā vāhān āruhya daṁśitāḥ
svaiḥ svair balaiḥ parikrāntā anvīyur dhṛta-kārmukāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, all those infuriated kings donned their armor and mounted their conveyances. Each king, bow in hand, was surrounded by his own army as he went after Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They mounted elephants and other conveyances. When they fainted, they had dropped their weapons and fell on the ground. Now they took up their bows and mounted their elephants again.

Text 54.2

tān āpatata ālokya yādavānīka-yūthapāḥ
tasthus tat-sammukhā rājan visphūrjya sva-dhanūṁṣi te

The commanders of the Yādava army, seeing the enemy racing to attack, turned to face them and stood firm, O king, twanging their bows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Those (*te*) who were famous as commanders of the Yādava armies, who had gathered with Balarāma previously in anticipation of a fight, faced the enemy. They drew their extraordinary (*sva*) bows.

Text 54.3

aśva-pṛṣṭhe gaja-skandhe rathopasthe 'stra kovidāḥ
mumucuḥ śara-varṣāṇi meghā adriṣv apo yathā

Mounted on the backs of horses, the shoulders of elephants and the seats of chariots, the enemy kings, expert with weapons, rained down

arrows upon the Yadus like clouds pouring rain on mountains.

COMMENTARY: Seated in their chariots (*rathopaṣṭhe*), an expert at war (*kovidāḥ*), the enemy headed by Jarāsandha released a shower of arrows. The arrows were spread among the warriors. The showers from horses, elephants and chariots were progressively greater, because of their size. Because they were expert, they released showers of arrows as if they were clouds.

Text 54.4

patyur balaṁ śarāsāraiś channaṁ vīkṣya su-madhyamā
sa-vrīḍam aikṣat tad-vaktraṁ bhaya-vihvala-locanā

Rukmiṇī, her waist bent, seeing her Lord's army covered by torrents of arrows, shyly looked at his face with fear-stricken eyes.

COMMENTARY: Her waist (*su-madhyamā*) was bent due to meekness caused by shyness. Seeing directly (*vīkṣya*) the army of her husband covered with arrows, she developed tears of fear in her unsteady or agitated eyes. This was because she was the best of women (*sumadhyamā*). They are always timid. Seeing the armies covered with arrows, shyly she looked at Kṛṣṇa's face since she was the best of women or had an innocent gaze.

Text 54.5

prahasya bhagavān āha mā sma bhair vāma-locane
vinaṅkṣyaty adhunaivaitat tāvakaiḥ śātravaṁ balam

In response, the Lord laughed and assured her, "Do not be afraid, beautiful-eyed one. This enemy force is about to be destroyed by our troops."

COMMENTARY: He laughed loudly to destroy her fear, since he was directly the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*). That is mentioned by Kapila:

hāsaṁ harer avanatākhila-loka-tīvra-
śokāśru-sāgara-viśoṣaṇam atyudāram

One should meditate on the generous smile of the Lord which completely dries up the ocean of tears of intense grief in his devotees caused by separation. SB 3.28.32

O lotus-eyed one! Your eyes have become more beautiful by the agitation of fear. The enemy troops will be destroyed by the Yadu troops related to you (*tāvakaiḥ*). They will all die. His troops were many, indicated by the plural. This will pacify her. The "enemy troops" is in the singular to indicate their small army.

Text 54.6

teṣāṁ tad-vikramaṁ vīrā gada-saṅkarṣanādayaḥ
amṛṣyamāṇā nārācair jaghnur haya-gajān rathān

The heroes of the Lord's army, headed by Gada and Saṅkarṣaṇa, could not tolerate the aggression of the opposing kings. Thus with iron arrows they began to strike down the enemy's horses, elephants and chariots.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *vikramam* (courage) is used to indicate the very nature of the enemy warriors, such as the word blue in blue lotus indicates the lotus's nature. Gada and others could not tolerate the enemies' courage. Gada is mentioned first because out of great devotion he was in front. Since the horses travelled the fastest, they were first to receive the arrows. The elephants were next. Last, they destroyed all the chief chariots with a desire for complete victory.

Text 54.7

petuḥ śirāṁsi rathinām aśvināṁ gajināṁ bhuvi
sa-kuṇḍala-kirīṭāni soṣṇīṣāṇi ca koṭiśaḥ

The heads of soldiers fighting on chariots, horses and elephants fell to the ground by the millions; some heads wore earrings and helmets, others turbans.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The heads fell in order of excellence again from those riding on horses, those riding on elephants and those riding on chariots. The majority fell with earrings, etc. though some fell with the earrings and crowns falling separately. By indicating the numbers of dead, the valor of the Yadus is

known. “By the millions” is understood with the words in the next verse also.

Text 54.8

hastāḥ sāsi-gadeṣv-āsāḥ karabhā ūravo ’ṅghrayaḥ
aśvāśvatara-nāgoṣṭra-khara-martya-śirāṁsi ca

Lying all around were thighs, legs and fingers, along with hands clutching swords, clubs and bows, and also the heads of horses, mules, elephants, camels, wild asses and humans.

COMMENTARY: The weapons in the hand are mentioned according to the distance they inflict injury—from close to far: swords, clubs, and arrows. The limbs are mentioned in order of the height from which they fell. The horses, mules and elephants were carriers of warriors and the camels, wild asses and humans carried weapons for fighting.

Text 54.9

hanyamāna-balānīkā vṛṣṇibhir jaya-kāṅkṣibhiḥ
rājāno vimukhā jagmur jarāsandha-puraḥ-sarāḥ

Seeing their armies being struck down by the Vṛṣṇis, who were behaving like victors, the kings headed by Jarāsandha were discouraged and left the battlefield.

COMMENTARY: The Yadus desired victory or manifested victory, or manifested Kṛṣṇa (*jaya*). They were the best of devotees.

Text 54.10

śiśupālaṁ samabhyetya hṛta-dāram ivāturam
naṣṭa-tviṣaṁ gatotsāhaṁ śuṣyad-vadanam abruvan

The kings approached Śiśupāla, who was disturbed like a man who has lost his wife. His complexion was drained of color, his enthusiasm was gone, and his face appeared dried up. The kings spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: The kings gathered (*samabhyetya*) and spoke to Śiśupāla after the Yadu victory. Or meeting Śiśupāla, they spoke, since he was intensely suffering, as if he had lost his wife. His complexion was gone. His power of body, mind and words was gone (*gatotsāham*). His face was dried

up. This indicates he could not speak also. The descriptive elements show increasing results of pain.

Text 54.11

bho bhoḥ puruṣa-śārdūla daurmanasyam idaṁ tyaja
na priyāpriyayo rājan niṣṭhā dehiṣu dṛśyate

[Jarāsandha said:] Listen, Śiśupāla, O tiger among men, give up your depression. After all, embodied beings' happiness and unhappiness are never seen to be permanent, O King.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Śukadeva mocks Śiśupāla through Jarāsandha's words. Jarāsandha repeats "*Bho, bho*" to make Śiśupāla, in great pain, face him. It is not proper for a tiger among men to become depressed. Since you are king you should know that the *jīva* takes many bodies. That is indicated when he says, "O King (*rājan*)!"

Text 54.12

yathā dāru-mayī yoṣit nṛtyate kuhakecchayā
evam īśvara-tantro 'yam īhate sukha-duḥkhayoḥ

Just as a puppet in the form of a woman dances by the desire of the puppeteer, so this world, controlled by the Supreme Lord, struggles in both happiness and misery.

COMMENTARY: Why is everything impermanent? It is the desire of the Lord. To show that the universe is dependent on the Lord, an example is given. Women like to dance. All people (*ayam*) experience happiness and distress, dependent on the Lord. When the Lord desires a person's happiness, he is happy. When he desires his suffering, he suffers. In happiness, he attains what he likes. In suffering, he attains what he does not like. Suffering is mentioned after happiness because there is no choice for the *jīva*. One cannot search out a cause, since it is by the desire of the Lord. If there was some other cause, the Lord's independence would be faulty. It would mean no Supreme Lord.

Text 54.13

śaureḥ sapta-daśāhaṁ vai saṁyugāni parājitaḥ
trayo-viṁśatibhiḥ sainyair jigye ekam ahaṁ param

In battle with Kṛṣṇa I and my twenty-three armies lost seventeen times; only once did I defeat him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though they gathered and spoke to Śiśupāla, he did not give up his depression. Jarāsandha then consoled him by citing his personal experience. I was defeated even with twenty-three *akṣauhiṇīs.*

This is well known (*vai*). The possessive (*śaureḥ*) is used to indicate the instrumental *śaurena.*

I was defeated by the son of a warrior (*śaureḥ*). He hides the fact that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord out of pride. To protect his pride he says, "I defeated him once."

Text 54.14

tathāpy ahaṁ na śocāmi na prahṛṣyāmi karhicit
kālena daiva-yuktena jānan vidrāvitaṁ jagat

But still I never lament or rejoice, because I know this world is driven by time and fate.

COMMENTARY: He gives the conclusion. I never lament in defeat. I never rejoice in victory. *Karhicit* should be understood with both statements. I know the world is agitated by time. "Since time is equal everywhere, there should be no appearance of happiness or sorrow." Time is linked with karma, which gives various results to various people. Previously, he said it was the will of the Lord. Now he says it is time endowed with karma (*daiva*). One cannot find another cause. Or time is related to the Lord (*kālena daiva-yuktena*). It is under his control.

Text 54.15

adhunāpi vayaṁ sarve vīra-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ
parājitāḥ phalgu-tantrair yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ

And now all of us, great commanders of military leaders, have been defeated by the Yadus and their small entourage, who are protected by Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: All the kings speak together to comfort him, since it is later said that he was persuaded by his friends. We were defeated. Or Jarāsandha speaks but indicates all the kings present. Though we were leaders of leaders of armies—most valorous, we were defeated by the Yadus protected by the son of a cowherd. This indicates the Yadus' inferior status.

Text 54.16

ripavo jigyur adhunā kāla ātmānusāriṇi
tadā vayaṁ vijeṣyāmo yadā kālaḥ pradakṣiṇaḥ

Now our enemies have conquered but, in the future, when time is auspicious for us, we shall conquer.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He uses his philosophy to pacify Śiśupāla. When time is favorable to ourselves (*ātma*), we will defeat them more soundly (*vi-jeṣyāmaḥ)* than they have conquered us now. Some versions have *vayam ca* which means "we also."

Text 54.17

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ prabodhito mitraiś caidyo 'gāt sānugaḥ puram
hata-śeṣāḥ punas te 'pi yayuḥ svaṁ svaṁ puraṁ nṛpāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus persuaded by his friends, Śiśupāla took his followers and went back to his capital. The surviving warriors also returned to their respective cities.

COMMENTARY: Śiśupāla was enlightened by logic and sympathetic words (*pra-bodhitaḥ*) by well-wishers (*mitraiḥ*). Because they were friends, he was obliged to follow their words. With his father and others, he returned to his city. The remaining warriors returned to their cities. This indicates that many died.

Text 54.18

rukmī tu rākṣasodvāhaṁ kṛṣṇa-dviḍ asahan svasuḥ
pṛṣṭhato ’nvagamat kṛṣṇam akṣauhiṇyā vṛto balī

Powerful Rukmī, however, was especially envious of Kṛṣṇa. He could not bear the fact that Kṛṣṇa had carried off his sister to marry her in the Rākṣasa style. Thus he pursued the Lord with an entire military division.

COMMENTARY: *Tu* indicates a different topic. He could not tolerate his sister being carried off since he hated Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord (*kṛṣṇa-dvit*). This shows his foolishness and wickedness. Afterwards, he pursued Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa had departed for Dvārakā, leaving the fighting to Balarāma and others.

ādāya rukmiṇīṁ kṛṣṇo jagāmāśu purīṁ prati
rāme cāsajya taṁ bhāraṁ yuyudhāne ca vīryavān
akrūre vipṛthau cāpi gade ca kṛtavarmaṇi
cakradeve sudeve sāraṇe ca mahābale
nivṛttaśatrau vikrānte bhaṅgakāre vidūrathe
ugrasenātmaje kaṅke śatadyumne ca keśavaḥ
rājādhideve mṛdare prasene citrake tathā
atidānte bṛhaddurge śvaphalke satyake pṛthau
vṛṣṇyandhakeṣu cānyeṣu mukhyeṣu madhusūdanaḥ

Taking Rukmiṇī, courageous Kṛṣṇa departed for Dvārakā. He gave the responsibility of fighting to Balarāma, Yuyudhāna, Akrūra, Vipṛthu, Gada, Kṛtavarmā, Cakradeva, Sudeva, Sāraṇa, Mahābala, Nivṛttaśatru, Vikrānta, Bhaṅgakāra, Vidūratha, Ugrasena’s son named Kaṅka, Śatadyumna, Rājādhideva, Mṛdara, Prasena, Citraka, Atidānta. Bṛhaddurga, Śvaphalka, Satyaka and Pṛthu as well as many other leading Vṛṣnis and Andhakas. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Surrounded by one *akṣauhiṇī* or many, Rukmī pursued the Lord. He was capable of fighting (*baliḥ*).

Texts 54.19–20

rukmy amarṣī su-saṁrabdhaḥ śṛṇvatāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām
pratijajñe mahā-bāhur daṁśitaḥ sa-śarāsanaḥ
ahatvā samare kṛṣṇam apratyūhya ca rukmiṇīm
kuṇḍinaṁ na pravekṣyāmi satyam etad bravīmi vaḥ

Intolerant and enraged, mighty-armed Rukmī, dressed in armor and wielding his bow, had sworn before all the kings, "I shall not again enter Kuṇḍina if I do not kill Kṛṣṇa in battle and bring Rukmiṇī back with me. I swear this to you."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

To show his great courage he made a fitting promise to all the kings who were listening while he raised his arms (*mahā-bahūḥ*). He was already wearing his armor. Without killing Kṛṣṇa in battle, and without bringing back Rukmiṇī, I will not enter Kuṇḍina. This was because he could not show his face to the citizens if he were defeated. This was like a prediction of the future.

Text 54.21

ity uktvā ratham āruhya sārathiṁ prāha satvaraḥ
codayāśvān yataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ tasya me saṁyugaṁ bhavet

Having said this, he had mounted his chariot and told his charioteer, "Drive the horses quickly to where Kṛṣṇa is. He and I must fight.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Drive the horses to where Kṛṣṇa is, even if it is his impenetrable fort of Dvārakā. Why? He should fight with me. The potential mood is used (*bhavet*) to express his strong wish or to express purpose. Drive the horses so that I may fight with him.

Text 54.22

adyāhaṁ niśitair bāṇair gopālasya su-durmateḥ
neṣye vīrya-madaṁ yena svasā me prasabhaṁ hṛtā

"This wicked-minded cowherd boy has violently abducted my sister. But today I will remove his pride in his prowess with my sharp arrows."

COMMENTARY: What is the purpose of doing this? I will take away his pride in his prowess. The other meaning is this: I will offer my pride with arrows

to the Lord, Gopāla, famous as the *devatā* of the mantra, since he has made me his younger brother.

Text 54.23

vikatthamānaḥ kumatir īśvarasyāpramāṇa-vit
rathenaikena govindaṁ tiṣṭha tiṣṭhety athāhvayat

Boasting thus, foolish Rukmī, ignorant of the true extent of the Supreme Lord's power, in his lone chariot, approached the Lord who had appeared on earth and challenged him. "Just stand and fight!"

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Vikatthamānaḥ means speaking badly, or boasting. He was foolish (*kumatiḥ*). And he was ignorant of the Lord's glories. Fooling Balarāma by taking another path, Rukmī was with one chariot. He called out to fight personally with Kṛṣṇa alone in great pride, since he had left all the troops far behind.

avasthāpya ca tat sainyaṁ rukmī mada-balānvitaḥ
cikīrṣur dvairathaṁ yuddham abhyayān madhusūdanam

With great pride Rukmī, in the midst of his army, called to Kṛṣṇa, desiring combat between the two chariots. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Govinda means *bhagavān* who has directly appeared on earth (*go*). The word Kṛṣṇa which appeared later in the text will have a similar meaning. His repeating "Stop, stop" indicates his foolishness.

Text 54.24

dhanur vikṛṣya su-dṛḍhaṁ jaghne kṛṣṇaṁ tribhiḥ śaraiḥ
āha cātra kṣaṇaṁ tiṣṭha yadūnāṁ kula-pāṁsana

Rukmī drew his bow with great strength and struck Kṛṣṇa with three arrows. Then he said, "Stand here for a moment, O defiler of the Yadu dynasty!

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

īDesiring to incite him further, Kṛṣṇa ignored his call and kept moving. Rukmī then shot at him with arrows from behind. Again he spoke as Kṛṣṇa kept moving. Or when he called, Kṛṣṇa faced him. He then spoke with the pride of a warrior. “Stop for a moment, O enemy!” Or the real meaning can be “Please stop so that I may see you quickly (*kṣaṇam*).” *Kṣaṇam* can mean “quickly.”

Text 54.25

yatra yāsi svasāraṁ me muṣitvā dhvāṅkṣa-vad dhaviḥ
hariṣye ’dya madaṁ manda māyinaḥ kūṭa-yodhinaḥ

“Wherever you go, carrying off my sister like a crow stealing sacrificial butter, I will follow. This very day I shall relieve you of your false pride, you fool, you deceiver, you cheater in battle!

COMMENTARY: Stealing my sister was highly improper, like a crow stealing butter. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the other meaning. Because of deception, you fight by cheating. The real meaning is “I will offer you my pride. Why? You are merciful (*māyinaḥ)*, determined in fighting (*kūṭa-yodhinaḥ*).”

Text 54.26

yāvan na me hato bāṇaiḥ śayīthā muñca dārīkām
smayan kṛṣṇo dhanuś chittvā ṣaḍbhir vivyādha rukmiṇam

“Release the girl before you are struck dead by my arrows and made to lie down!” In response to this, Kṛṣṇa smiled, and with six arrows he struck Rukmī and broke his bow.

COMMENTARY: Before you are injured by my arrows and are made to lie down, free the girl. The other meaning is “Strike me, having come to lie down, being injured by your arrows”. Or “Until, being injured by your arrows, and having my pride removed, do not remain complacent. Do not free the girl. It is not proper to give up fighting.” The word *me* modifies *madam* and *manda* in the previous verse. He criticizes himself because of his pride. Kṛṣṇa smiled. In either case, he should not speak in this way. Kṛṣṇa released six arrows to strike his head, two hands, two feet, and waist.

Text 54.27

aṣṭabhiś caturo vāhān dvābhyāṁ sūtaṁ dhvajaṁ tribhiḥ
sa cānyad dhanur ādhāya kṛṣṇaṁ vivyādha pañcabhiḥ

The Lord struck Rukmī's four horses with eight arrows, his chariot driver with two, and the chariot's flag with three. Rukmī grabbed another bow and struck Kṛṣṇa with five arrows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa struck each of the four horses with two arrows each, to injure their two front feet. He shot two arrows at the driver to pierce his two hands. With three arrows he pierced the insignia, the flag and the pole. He did this to comfort Rukmiṇī.

Text 54.28

tais tāditaḥ śaraughais tu ciccheda dhanur acyutaḥ
punar anyad upādatta tad apy acchinad avyayaḥ

Although hit by these many arrows, Acyuta again broke Rukmī's bow. Rukmī picked up yet another bow, but the infallible Lord broke that one to pieces as well.

COMMENTARY: Though hit by all these arrows, Kṛṣṇa broke his bow. Then he took another bow. Instead of *avyayaḥ* at the end of the verse sometimes *acyutaḥ* is seen. That means he did not move from his place or never failed to be affectionate to his devotees.

Text 54.29

parighaṁ paṭṭiśaṁ śūlaṁ carmāsī śakti-tomarau
yad yad āyudham ādatta tat sarvaṁ so 'cchinad dhariḥ

Iron bludgeon, three-pointed spear, lance, sword and shield, pike, javelin —whatever weapon Rukmī picked up, the Lord who destroys the wicked, smashed it.

COMMENTARY: Instead of *śakti-tomarau* sometimes *śakti-tomarāni* is seen. *Paṭṭiśa* and *asi*, as well as the *śula* and *śakti,* are slightly different in shape. *Tomara* is a type of arrow. They are listed from heavy to light items. Other

weapons were also used (*yad yad*). The Lord was he who is the master, controlled by his devotees (*saḥ*). Though he was capable of killing him immediately, he smashed his weapons.

Text 54.30

tato rathād avaplutya khaḍga-pāṇir jighāṁsayā
kṛṣṇam abhyadravat kruddhaḥ pataṅga iva pāvakam

Then Rukmī leaped down from his chariot and, sword in hand, rushed furiously toward Kṛṣṇa to kill him, like a bird flying into the wind.

COMMENTARY: Because his weapons were destroyed (*tataḥ*), being angry, he jumped from the chariot and ran towards Kṛṣṇa, like a bird in the wind: he was running to his death.

Text 54.31

tasya cāpatataḥ khaḍgaṁ tilaśaś carma ceṣubhiḥ
chittvāsim ādade tigmaṁ rukmiṇaṁ hantum udyataḥ

As Rukmī attacked him, the Lord shot arrows that broke Rukmī's sword and shield into small pieces. Kṛṣṇa then took up his own sharp sword and prepared to kill Rukmī.

COMMENTARY: *Tigmam* modifies *asim* (sharp sword). Or it can modify *rukmiṇam* (Rukmī, sharp with energy).

Text 54.32

dṛṣṭvā bhrātṛ-vadhodyogaṁ rukmiṇī bhaya-vihvalā
patitvā pādayor bhartur uvāca karuṇaṁ satī

Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa ready to kill her brother, saintly Rukmiṇī was filled with alarm. She fell at her husband's feet and piteously spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: Seeing Kṛṣṇa about to kill him, Rukmiṇī became unsteady with emotion, because people would blame her. She fell at the feet of Kṛṣṇa because he was her husband. She spoke pitifully to invoke his mercy or out of fear. Someone may argue, "It is proper to kill such an evil person." But she was full of good qualities like natural compassion (*satī*). She has affection, because he was her brother.

Text 54.33

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca
yogeśvarāprameyātman deva-deva jagat-pate
hantuṁ nārhasi kalyāṇa bhrātaraṁ me mahā-bhuja

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: O controller of all mystic power, immeasurable one, Lord of lords, master of the universe! O all auspicious and mighty-armed one, please do not kill my brother!

COMMENTARY: O Kṛṣṇa, with inconceivable powers (*yogeśvara*), with unlimited form (*aprameyātma*), worshipped even by the *brāhmaṇas* (*deva-deva*)! This indicates that he is the Supreme Lord because he is worshipped for his *svarūpa* of all powers. Moreover, he is the great destroyer of the worlds (*mahā-bhuja*). Therefore, you should not kill this insignificant person. Moreover, you are the protector of the universe. "But this evil person should be killed." O knower of dharma! One should not kill relatives. You know the dharma of the devotees. He is my brother. You should not kill him because you are auspicious for the universe (*kalyāṇa*).

Or the first two names indicate that he cannot be understood in his powerful form. Even *devatās* cannot know him. You are worshipped by austerities. O *deva-deva*! You should forgive all offenses committed since you cannot be understood. Moreover, you should not kill this insignificant, weak fellow, since you are so strong (*mahābhuja*).

Text 54.34

śrī-śuka uvāca
tayā paritrāsa-vikampitāṅgayā
śucāvaśuṣyan-mukha-ruddha-kaṇṭhayā
kātarya-visraṁsita-hema-mālayā
gṛhīta-pādaḥ karuṇo nyavartata

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī's utter fear caused her limbs to tremble and her mouth to dry up, while her throat choked up out of sorrow. And in her agitation, her golden necklace scattered. She grasped Kṛṣṇa's feet, and the Lord, feeling compassionate, desisted.

COMMENTARY: She was in a miserable condition because of great fear, lamentation and confusion. This is indicated by the three phrases

describing her condition. They are successively intense. He was merciful to her (*karuṇaḥ*). Or he was by nature merciful, but because she held his feet, he desisted from killing her brother.

Text 54.35

cailena baddhvā tam asādhu-kārīṇaṁ
sa-śmaśru-keśaṁ pravapan vyarūpayat
tāvan mamarduḥ para-sainyam adbhutaṁ
yadu-pravīrā nalinīṁ yathā gajāḥ

Kṛṣṇa tied up the evil-doer with a strip of cloth. He then proceeded to disfigure Rukmī by comically shaving him, leaving parts of his mustache and hair. By that time, the Yadu heroes had crushed the extraordinary army of their opponents, just as elephants crush a lotus flower.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa tore a piece of his cloth and tied up Rukmī. Forcibly he shaved him because he did wicked deeds. While Kṛṣṇa did this, the Yadus defeated his armies. This happened simultaneously. The troops were situated far from the city and were unlimited and proud. Or though they were proud and valorous, the best warriors among the Yadus like Balaṛāma crushed them easily. This is illustrated with the example of the elephants crushing a lotus.

Text 54.36

kṛṣṇāntikam upavrajya dadṛśus tatra rukmiṇam
tathā-bhūtaṁ hata-prāyaṁ dṛṣṭvā saṅkarṣaṇo vibhuḥ
vimucya baddhaṁ karuṇo bhagavān kṛṣṇam abravīt

As the Yadus approached Kṛṣṇa, they saw Rukmī in this sorry condition, practically dying of shame. When the all-powerful Balarāma saw Rukmī, he compassionately released him and spoke the following to Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: They saw Rukmī with his shaved heard. Balarāma had a different *bhāva* from Kṛṣṇa, since he was the elder brother (*vibhuḥ*). Thus he released him with affectionate words. “But it is not proper to release such an offender.” He was merciful. He was omniscient *(bhagavān*). He knew that if he spoke to Kṛṣṇa roughly and spoke to Rukmī with affection he would relieve Rukmiṇī of lamentation.

Text 54.37

asādhv idaṁ tvayā kṛṣṇa kṛtam asmaj-jugupsitam
vapanaṁ śmaśru-keśānāṁ vairūpyaṁ suhṛdo vadhaḥ

[Lord Balarāma said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, you have acted improperly! This deed will bring shame on us, for to disfigure a close relative by shaving off his mustache and hair is as good as killing him.

COMMENTARY: O giver of all happiness (*kṛṣṇa*)! It is wrong for us to do this criticized act. Balarāma includes himself in this act (*asmat*). Others can do this, but not us. Or it is an act for which others will criticize us. Out of shame, he does not mention the act in the beginning, but later mentions it. This disfiguring him is not a small punishment, but death.

Text 54.38

maivāsmān sādhvy asūyethā bhrātur vairūpya-cintayā
sukha-duḥkha-do na cānyo 'sti yataḥ sva-kṛta-bhuk pumān

Saintly lady, please do not be displeased with us out of anxiety for your brother's disfigurement. No one but oneself is responsible for one's joy and grief, for a man experiences the result of his own deeds.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though Balarāma spoke to Kṛṣṇa in this way, Rukmiṇī did not give up her grief. He then consoled her directly in this verse. Do not ascribe fault to Kṛṣṇa and others. Do not ascribe fault at all (*eva*), even if there is a cause. On the other hand (*ca*), happiness and distress are not caused by others, but by oneself since the *jīva* (*pumān*) enjoys the result of his karma.

Text 54.39

bandhur vadhārha-doṣo 'pi na bandhor vadham arhati
tyājyaḥ svenaiva doṣeṇa hataḥ kiṁ hanyate punaḥ

[Again addressing Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma said:] A relative should not be killed even if his wrongdoing warrants capital punishment. Rather, he should be thrown out of the family. Since he has already been killed by his own sin, why kill him again?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing her still in grief, Balarāma then scolded Kṛṣṇa in order to remove her grief. A person should not be killed by his relative (*bandhoḥ*). He should be rejected. This shows that he may be disrespected but cannot be killed. "Just as killing a person who should not be killed is a fault, not killing a person who should be killed is a fault." But he is killed by his own fault. What is the use of again killing this person who is killed by the rejection of society, which is the equivalent of death? It serves no purpose. By giving Rukmiṇī to another person he has been ostracized. Disfiguring him is death since it causes more grief than death itself.

Text 54.40

kṣatriyāṇām ayaṁ dharmaḥ prajāpati-vinirmitaḥ
bhrātāpi bhrātaraṁ hanyād yena ghoratamas tataḥ

The dharma of kṣatriyas established by Brahmā enjoins that one should kill even his own brother in a just war. That is a most dreadful law.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since she still did not give up her grief, he again tried to enlighten her by showing *sva-dharma* of *kṣatriyas.* This dharma of the *kṣatriyas*—obligatory action generated by karma— is that a brother must kill his brother in a just war. This is dharma because it has been created by Brahmā. This means it is directed by the Vedas. Therefore (*tataḥ*) this is a terrible rule since it involves killing a brother. Śrīdhara Svāmī agrees with this meaning.

Text 54.41

rājyasya bhūmer vittasya striyo mānasya tejasaḥ
mānino 'nyasya vā hetoḥ śrī-madāndhāḥ kṣipanti hi

[Again Balarāma addressed Kṛṣṇa:] Blinded by conceit with their personal wealth, proud men offend others for the sake of such things as kingdom, land, wealth, women, honor and power.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He again speaks harshly to Kṛṣṇa to console Rukmiṇī. Because of kingdom, land, worship (*mānasya*), beauty or strength (*tejasaḥ*) and other things like food and drink, proud people who become blinded by pride and wealth cause destruction. Since (*hi*) persons blinded by pride and wealth act in this way, we should not do this, since we are not blind.

Text 54.42

taveyaṁ viṣamā buddhiḥ sarva-bhūteṣu durhṛdām
yan manyase sadābhadraṁ suhṛdāṁ bhadram ajña-vat

[To Rukmiṇī Balarāma said:] Your attitude is unfair, for like an ignorant person you wish misfortune to those among all living beings who seem to be inimical and you wish good fortunate to those who appear to be friends.

COMMENTARY: Through the words for Rukmiṇī, he addressed Kṛṣṇa. However, she did still not give up lamenting. Thus he stopped speaking to Kṛṣṇa and enlightened her with philosophical teachings. You wish good fortune for friends and the opposite for enemies.

Text 54.43

ātma-moho nṛṇām eva kalpate deva-māyayā
suhṛd durhṛd udāsīna iti dehātma-māninām

The Supreme Lord's māyā makes men forget their real selves, and thus, taking the body for the self, they consider others to be friends, enemies or neutral parties.

COMMENTARY: The illusion of the mind or the self produces notions that someone is a friend, someone is an enemy, or someone is neutral by the Lord's *māyā*, because people think themselves to be the body. This is all illusion and difficult to surpass.

Or this illusion of the self, produced by the Lord's *māyā*, causes one to think someone is a friend and someone is an enemy. Mention of enemies and neutral parties is a general statement (not indicating Rukmiṇī's mind).

Text 54.44

eka eva paro hy ātmā sarveṣām api dehinām
nāneva gṛhyate mūḍhair yathā jyotir yathā nabhaḥ

Those who are bewildered perceive the ātmā, residing in all embodied beings, as many, just as one may perceive reflections of light or sky in pots.

COMMENTARY: "We directly see variety in the universe. So then there should also be friendship in the universe." How do you say that? This is an illusion about *ātmā*. All the *jīvas* are spiritual in nature, and thus actually have no difference. They are one only (*ekaḥ*). There is one ātmā for all those receiving various types of bodies of four types since it is different from the bodies (*paraḥ*). The bodies are various, but not the *ātmā*. Why is variety perceived? There is variety in the *upādhi* of bodies. An example is given. It looks like variety (*iva*) for fools who do not know the truth or who identify with their bodies, but is actually one. It is a reflection of the light in water. But the analogy is imperfect because the reflection does not remain like the body. Thus the example of the sky in the pot is given.

Text 54.45

deha ādy-antavān eṣa dravya-prāṇa-guṇātmakaḥ
ātmany avidyayā kḷptaḥ saṁsārayati dehinam

This material body, which has a beginning and an end, is composed of the physical elements, the senses and the sense *devatās.* The body, imposed on the self by material ignorance, causes one to experience the cycle of birth and death.

COMMENTARY: "Since the body is unconscious, how can it have a peaceful nature? How does the *jīva*, an *aṁśa* of the Lord, attain *saṁsāra* by attaining bodies?" This body, visible with various changes, or this body made of five elements (*eṣaḥ*), is distinct from the spiritual body of the Lord's associates.

Qualities like peacefulness manifest because it possesses conscious senses. "How can the senses be conscious?" They are imposed on the self (*ātmani*): the senses are related to the *ātmā* which is conscious, which is the basis of the senses. This body has birth and death. This body makes the

jīva who thinks he is the body, become subject to *saṁsāra*. This takes place by ignorance. Thus it is false.

Text 54.46

nātmano ʼnyena saṁyogo viyogaś cāsataḥ sati
tad-dhetutvāt tat-prasiddher dṛg-rūpābhyāṁ yathā raveḥ

O intelligent lady, the soul never undergoes contact with or separation from insubstantial, material objects, because the soul is the cause of matter's energy. Thus the soul resembles the sun, which neither comes in contact with nor separates from the eye and form.

COMMENTARY: First a logical example is given. There is no separation from the body or senses (*anyena*). Since the separation depends on a previous connection, the connection is also non-existent. The previous verse stated that the body was imposed on the *ātmā*. Thus, the body is also false. O pure woman! You have no relationship with purity or impurity. An example is given. The sun has no relation with or separation from the eye or form. Why? The sun is the cause of form and the eye, just as the *ātmā* is the cause of the senses. Being the effects, they are negated. Thus they do not exist: they have a beginning and end.

Text 54.47

janmādayas tu dehasya vikriyā nātmanaḥ kvacit
kalānām iva naivendor mṛtir hy asya kuhūr iva

Birth and other transformations are undergone by the body but never by the self, just as change occurs for the moon's phases but never for the moon, though the new-moon day may be called the moon's "death."

COMMENTARY: Birth of the body is illustrated. Birth, existence, growth, change, decay and death are six transformations (*vikriyā*) of the body. Even perfected persons as a pastime sometimes manifest these changes. "The body, by the action of the senses, definitely undergoes these changes, being non-different from changes in other bodies like one's father, etc. But the *ātmā* also dies at death since it appears that there is no consciousness." There is even the death of the moon. It seems that the moon is destroyed since one does not see its disk at the dark moon phase.

At other times, it seems that the moon is born and undergoes changes because one can see the moon. Similarly the body, not having consciousness, dies at death but not the *ātmā*.

Or "At the dark moon, there seems to be the death of the moon, since the moon is not present." The destruction of the phases of the moon is apparent death. It is not real death.

Text 54.48

yathā śayāna ātmānaṁ viṣayān phalam eva ca
anubhuṅkte 'py asaty arthe tathāpnoty abudho bhavam

As a sleeping person perceives himself, the objects of sense enjoyment and the fruits of his acts within the illusion of a dream, so one who is unintelligent undergoes material existence.

COMMENTARY: An example is given to show the falsity of *saṁsāra* by *ātmā's* identification with the body under ignorance. A sleeping person, any person, seeing a dream (*śayānaḥ*), experiences (*bhuṅkte*) objects and results (happiness and suffering), similar to the waking state (*anu*), and in the dream sees himself (*ātmanam*) as a king, etc. "If this is so, then everything is real in the dream." No. They are non-existent. The objects (*arthe*) are non-existent (*asati*). The person who does not know about *ātmā* (*abudhaḥ*) undergoes *saṁsāra* (*bhavam*). From ignorance arises birth and death. It has no real existence.

Text 54.49

tasmād ajñāna-jaṁ śokam ātma-śoṣa-vimohanam
tattva-jñānena nirhṛtya sva-sthā bhava śuci-smite

Therefore, with true knowledge dispel the grief that is weakening and confounding your mind. Please resume your natural mood, O princess with a joyful heart!

COMMENTARY: This grief makes you tasteless (*śoṣa*) and completely bewildered (*vimohanam*). It destroys your intelligence completely. By the knowledge presented, or by being situated in your true self, dispel this grief, O woman with a pure smile! Because of that smile, you must have a joyful heart. It is understood that actually you do not have grief. Please

forgive my audacious act. O woman with a pure heart, with a pure smile! Be absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. Without directly stating it, he wishes to negate the boldness of his speech.

Text 54.50

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ bhagavatā tanvī rāmeṇa pratibodhitā
vaimanasyaṁ parityajya mano buddhyā samādadhe

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus enlightened by Balarāma, slender Rukmiṇī forgot her depression and steadied her mind by spiritual intelligence.

COMMENTARY: She was thin (*tanvī*) because of lamentation. Or her thin waist indicates her great beauty. His words enlightened her. Otherwise she whould not be beautiful. Lamentation would destroy her beauty. She was taught directly (*pratibodhitāḥ*) because Balarāma was omniscient (*bhagavatā*), knowing the intention of Kṛṣṇa. *Rāmena* means "by he who gives happiness." She concentrated her mind constantly on Kṛṣṇa in prema (*samādadhe*).

Text 54.51

prāṇāvaśeṣa utsṛṣṭo dviḍbhir hata-bala-prabhaḥ
smaran virūpa-karaṇaṁ vitathātma-manorathaḥ
cakre bhojakaṭaṁ nāma nivāsāya mahat puram

Left with only his life air, freed from bondage and deprived of his strength, armies and bodily radiance by his enemies, Rukmī could not forget how he had been disfigured. In frustration he constructed for his residence a large city, which he called Bhojakaṭa.COMMENTARY: He was left with only his life because his strength and abilities or army had been destroyed. His desire to defeat Kṛṣṇa was made false (*vitatha*). These were successively greater causes for constructing his city. This city was bigger than Bhīṣmaka's city. It was called Bhojakaṭa because it was caused by an oath to conquer the Yadus (Bhojas). *Kaṭa* means an agreement or oath according to the dictionary. Actually, it was as insignificant as straw (*kaṭa*) for the Yadus.

Text 54.52

ahatvā durmatiṁ kṛṣṇam apratyūhya yavīyasīm
kuṇḍinaṁ na pravekṣyāmīty uktvā tatrāvasad ruṣā

Because he had promised "I will not reenter Kuṇḍina until I have killed wicked Kṛṣṇa and brought back my younger sister," in a mood of angry frustration Rukmī took up residence at that place.

COMMENTARY: He had affection for Rukmiṇī. Thus he calls her his younger sister (*yavīyasīm*). That will be clear in the marriage of Pradyumna and Rukmavatī. He made this statement in his pitiful condition because he was angry. In anger one does not consider things logically.

Text 54.53

bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutām evaṁ nirjitya bhūmi-pān
puram ānīya vidhi-vad upayeme kurūdvaha

Thus defeating all the opposing kings, the Supreme Lord brought the daughter of Bhīṣmaka to his capital and married her according to the Vedic injunctions, O protector of the Kurus.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa manifested his powers to defeat the evil kings (*bhagavān*). Bhīṣmaka also came later, carrying ingredients for the marriage out of affection (*bhīṣmaka-sūtam*). Later it is described that the people of Vidarbha enjoyed in Dvārakā. The wedding was conducted according to the rules.

"How did he marry her? Please describe this in detail." O descendent of the Kurus! You know this because you come in a family of great *kṣatriyas.*

Text 54.54

tadā mahotsavo nṝṇāṁ yadu-puryāṁ gṛhe gṛhe
abhūd ananya-bhāvānāṁ kṛṣṇe yadu-patau nṛpa

At that time, O king, there was great rejoicing in all the homes of Dvārakā, whose citizens had *prema* for only Kṛṣṇa, chief of the Yadus.

COMMENTARY: There was more rejoicing among all humans (*nṛṇām*) than in Vaikuṇṭha (*mahotsavaḥ*) with songs and music. It is called the city of the Yadus because they were most prominent. There was rejoicing in each house because they had *bhakti* (*bhāva*) without expectation of other

results for he who attracts all hearts or is directly Bhagavān. “Why?” He manifested unlimited powers by protecting the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-patau*). Or this was the reason for rejoicing in the city of the Yadus. Or they knew him as the king of the Yadus and not the Supreme Lord. Or they had *prema* whose cause was only Kṛṣṇa (*ananya-bhāvānām*). O king! Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in great joy. Or it was suitable to rejoice at the wedding of one’s master. You as a king understand this.

Text 54.55

narā nāryaś ca muditāḥ pramṛṣṭa-maṇi-kuṇḍalāḥ
pāribarham upājahrur varayoś citra-vāsasoḥ

All the men and women, full of joy and adorned with shining jewels and earrings, brought wedding presents, which they reverently offered to the exquisitely dressed groom and bride.

COMMENTARY: The jewels shone more than usual (*pramṛṣṭa*). The bride and groom were dressed attractively with oil and turmeric (*citra*). This was characteristic of the wedding. The people offered presents at close hand or as gifts (*upa*). The two were the best (*varayoḥ*). Thus the gifts were the best. Their clothing was remarkable (*citra*), with many colors.

Text 54.56

sā vṛṣṇi-pury uttambhitendra-ketubhir
vicitra-mālyāmbara-ratna-toraṇaiḥ
babhau prati-dvāry upakḷpta-maṅgalair
āpūrṇa-kumbhāguru-dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ

The city of the Vṛṣṇis appeared most beautiful: there were tall, festive columns, and also archways decorated with flower garlands, cloth banners and precious gems. Arrangements of auspicious, full water pots, aguru-scented incense, and lamps graced every doorway.

COMMENTARY: The city was endowed with all wealth, or was decorated for the festival (*sā*), or had indescribable magnificence. At various places, colorful garlands and banners were placed. Or the colorful arches had garlands. By these arches and garlands, the city shone.

Text 54.57

sikta-mārgā mada-cyudbhir āhūta-preṣṭha-bhūbhujām
gajair dvāḥsu parāmṛṣṭa-rambhā-pūgopaśobhitā

The city's streets were soaked with the *mada* of intoxicated elephants belonging to the beloved kings who were guests at the wedding, and the city was made additionally beautiful by trunks of plantain and betel-nut trees decorating all the doorways.

COMMENTARY: The city was made beautiful with plantain and betel-nut trees placed everywhere, having fruits grabbed by elephants for eating (*parāmṛṣṭa*). Thus the banana trees were huge and strong, and indicated auspiciousness. The streets were sprinkled with *mada* from the elephants or with scented water. Or the elephants could sprinkle the streets and eat the fruit.

Text 54.58

kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikeya-vidarbha-yadu-kuntayaḥ
mitho mumudire tasmin sambhramāt paridhāvatām

Those who belonged to the royal families of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya, Kaikeya, Vidarbha, Yadu and Kuntibhoja clans joyfully met one another in the midst of the crowds of people excitedly running here and there.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The kings who were called are described. Associating with each other they became joyful. The Kurus include Bhīṣma, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and the Pāṇḍavas. The Sṛñjayas included Drupada. The Kaikeyas included Santardana. The people of Vidarbha came out of affection for Rukmiṇī. Kṛṣṇa was acceptable to the kings of Vidarbha, because abducting was praised for *kṣatriyas* and they had previously approved of Kṛṣṇa as the groom. Because Balarāma had sages invite them and bring them, they did not feel uncomfortable. Bhīṣmaka also came and also Kratha and Kaiśika. The Yādavas included Ugrasena. Some say that Nanda and others came from Vraja since they were also called Yādavas. It is said in *Padma Purāṇa*:

nanda-gopo'tha gopālair gopa-vṛndaiḥ samāgataḥ
svalaṁkṛtābhir yoṣidbhir yaśodā ca samāgatā

Nanda came along with the cowherds and Yaśodā also came with women who were well decorated.

After the killing of Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa had asked Nanda for permission to stay in Mathurā with the following intention:

jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo vidhāya suhṛdāṁ sukham

We shall come to see you, our dear relatives who suffer in separation from us, as soon as we have given some happiness to your well-wishing friends. SB 10.45.23

Kunti means Kuntibhoja and his group. People were running here and there (*pari-dhāvatām*) for making arrangements for the marriage.

Text 54.59

rukmiṇyā haraṇaṁ śrutvā gīyamānaṁ tatas tataḥ
rājāno rāja-kanyāś ca babhūvur bhṛśa-vismitāḥ

The kings and their daughters were totally astonished to hear the story of Rukmiṇī's abduction, which was being glorified in song everywhere.

COMMENTARY: The abduction was glorified everywhere (*tatas tataḥ*) or in all the provinces where the kings resided. They were greatly astonished by the method of abduction. The kings thought that their daughters should be given to Kṛṣṇa also.

Text 54.60

dvārakāyām abhūd rājan mahā-modaḥ puraukasām
rukmiṇyā ramayopetaṁ dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇaṁ śriyaḥ patim

Dvārakā's citizens were overjoyed to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Lakṣmī, united with Rukmiṇī, within who Lakṣmī had merged.

COMMENTARY: After the marriage, because of seeing the couple happy together, all the people of Dvārakā became filled with bliss. That is described in this verse. The residents of Dvārakā, living there all the time, were constantly close to the Lord and often saw him. Thus they were happy. Or they were especially happy because of their special *bhakti*

(*mahā-modaḥ*). They saw Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān, the husband of Lakṣmī. She necessarily depended on him. She had now merged with Rukmiṇī. Thus the joy was very great (*mahā-modaḥ*), since Kṛṣṇa had achieved happiness through the most suitable wife. O king! The king shone (*rājan*) because of joy on hearing this story. Or the great joy was brilliant (*rājan*).

Chapter Fifty-five
The History of Pradyumna

Text 55.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
kāmas tu vāsudevāṁśo dagdhaḥ prāg rudra-manyunā
dehopapattaye bhūyas tam eva pratyapadyata

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kāmadeva [Cupid], a vibhūti of Vāsudeva, had previously been burned to ashes by Rudra's anger. Now, to obtain a new body, he merged into Pradumnya.

COMMENTARY: The word *tu* indicates a different topic. The *rasa* of sons is different from Kṛṣṇa's *rasa* with Rukmiṇī. Or this chapter describes the special power of the Lord in producing the form of Cupid. This Cupid is an *aṁśa* of Vāsudeva, since he is an empowered portion arising from the *catur-vyūha*. Sometimes Cupid is called an *aṁśa* of Pradyumna or an *aṁśa* of Vāsudeva, since Pradyumna and Vāsudeva are non-different. Cupid was previously burned up by the anger of Śiva. To gain a body, he again merged into Pradyumna (*tam*), the third member of the *catur-vyūha,* his *aṁśī* or source. Pradyumna was the place of merging of Cupid. He was born from Rukmiṇī.

Or Cupid was able to bewilder the whole world by absorbing a particle of the great ocean of *śakti* of an *aṁśa* of Vāsudeva's son, who is most bewildering by his form and qualities. Actually Bhagavān, the great Cupid, is most attractive and bewildering. *Trailokya-sammohana-tantra says dhyāyen madana-gopālam*: one should mediate on Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd Cupid.

Text 55.2

sa eva jāto vaidarbhyāṁ kṛṣṇa-vīrya-samudbhavaḥ
pradyumna iti vikhyātaḥ sarvato 'navamaḥ pituḥ

He took birth in the womb of Vaidarbhī from the seed of Kṛṣṇa and received the name Pradyumna. In no respect was he inferior to his father.

COMMENTARY: He, the Lord, not his *aṁśa* (*saḥ*), was born from Rukmiṇī since he arose from the *vīrya* or special *śakti* of the Lord directly. He was Kṛṣṇa's son by birth. Pradyumna was the cause of Cupid who was burned by Śiva's anger appearing again. Thus, he gained more power than previously. He was not inferior to his father since he was Bhagavān, a member of the *catur-vyūha*. For special pastimes he took up the powers of Cupid. Appearing completely, along with his *aṁśa* Cupid, separate from Kṛṣṇa, he was born, providing a body for Cupid's burned body. He is famous by the name of Pradyumna since Pradyumna was the chief identity. This is described in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Text 55.3

taṁ śambaraḥ kāma-rūpī hṛtvā tokam anirdaśam
sa viditvātmanaḥ śatruṁ prāsyodanvaty agād gṛham

The demon Śambara, who could assume any form he desired, kidnapped the infant before he was even ten days old. Understanding Pradyumna to be his enemy, Śambara threw him into the sea and then returned home.

COMMENTARY: His glories are described in the rest of the chapter. *Śambara* means he who produced his own auspicious death. He stole Pradyumna. He could assume any form, such as that of a nurse. He could steal the child, because the child was not even ten days old, a baby (*tokam*).

ṣaṣṭhehni jātamātraṁ tu pradyumnaṁ sūtikāgṛhāt
mamaiṣa hanteti mune hṛtavānkālaśaṁbaraḥ

O sage! On the sixth day after birth, Kalāśambara stole Pradyumna from the confinement room since he recognized him as his killer. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Śambara was informed by Nārada that an enemy would kill himā, he knew that Pradyumna desired to kill him. Thus he took Pradyumna as an enemy. He threw him with effort, far way (*prāsya*), deep in the ocean. All this was by the desire of the Lord. Otherwise it could not happen.

viditaṁ tac ca kṛṣṇasya deva-māyānuvartinaḥ
tato na nigṛhītaḥ sa dānavo yuddha-durmadaḥ

The demon, intoxicated with a fighting spirit, by the influence of the Lord's *māyā*, understood that Pradyumna was the enemy, and was not prevented

from taking him. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Text 55.4

taṁ nirjagāra balavān mīnaḥ so ’py aparaiḥ saha
vṛto jālena mahatā gṛhīto matsya-jīvibhiḥ

A powerful fish swallowed Pradyumna, and this fish, along with others, was caught in a huge net and seized by fishermen.

COMMENTARY: By the will of the Lord the fish was strong. The fish could actually swallow him into his stomach. That is indicated by the word *ap*i. Or *api* indicates all that is described. Or although the fish was strong, it was caught with the other fish. This fish was a gift for Śambara. Otherwise, the fishermen would have eaten the fish.

Text 55.5

taṁ śambarāya kaivartā upājahrur upāyanam
sūdā mahānasaṁ nītvā-vadyan sudhitināḍbhutam

The fishermen presented that extraordinary fish to Śambara, who had his cooks bring it to the kitchen, where they began cutting it up with a butcher knife.

COMMENTARY: The fish was immediately given to Śambara to enjoy. It was outstanding by being bigger than other fish.

Text 55.6

dṛṣṭvā tad-udare bālam māyāvatyai nyavedayan
nārado ’kathayat sarvaṁ tasyāḥ śaṅkita-cetasaḥ
bālasya tattvam utpattiṁ matsyodara-niveśanam

Seeing a male child in the belly of the fish, the cooks gave the infant to Māyāvatī, who was astonished. Nārada Muni then appeared and explained to her everything about the child’s birth and his entering the fish’s abdomen.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Māyāvatī was alarmed (*śaṅkita-cetasaḥ*). “This child is most beautiful and looks like my husband. Why was he born from a fish? If he was actually born somewhere else, why did he not die within the fish? He must be some *devatā* or my husband.” Nārada told her everything—the reason why he had entered the belly of the fish. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that he spoke the truth, “He is Kāmadeva, your husband. He was born from Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī.” This would mean that her husband was the third member of the *catur-vyūha*. He was like the ray of the sun (a *vibhūti* of Pradyumna, merged in him). Nārada spoke in this way to relieve Māyāvatī of lamentation and bring about a meeting with Pradyumna. She then worshipped Pradyumna as being non-different from her husband and did not break her vow, in a manner similar to the *gopīs* desiring Kṛṣṇa as their husband. Pradyumna also, like a touchstone, made her qualified and then accepted her. She became the mother of Aniruddha and acted as Pradyumna’s direct *śakti.*

Texts 55.7–8

sā ca kāmasya vai patnī ratir nāma yaśasvinī
patyur nirdagdha-dehasya dehotpattim pratīkṣatī
nirūpitā śambareṇa sā sūpaudana-sādhane
kāmadevaṁ śiśuṁ buddhvā cakre snehaṁ tadārbhake

Māyāvatī was in fact Cupid’s renowned wife, Rati. While waiting for her husband to obtain a new body—his previous one having been burnt up—she had been assigned by Śambara to prepare vegetables and rice. Māyāvatī understood that this infant was actually Kāma-deva, and thus she began to feel love for him.

COMMENTARY: The word *ca* means “but.” This distinguishes her from Śambara. *Vai* means well known. She was well known as Cupid’s wife. Thus, she was not the wife of Śambara. His *ātmā* was not burned but his body was burned up completely. Thus he still resides in everyone’s heart at all times. She waited from him to reappear, living in Śambara’s house. By the mercy of Nārada, or Śiva, or by the power of her knowledge as a *devatā,* she could understand. Since she was famous, she just cooked soup and rice, since these are always the most excellent part of the meal. Or these items indicate other items as well. She was qualified for cooking all things.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa says *kārayām āsa sudānāṁ ādhipatyam anindatā:* she was made the chief cook and was not criticized.

Though Parāśara says she was Śambara's wife, it is understood that she had no intimate relations with him.

Nārada speaks to Rukmiṇī in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa:*

iyaṁ māyāvatī bhāryā tanayasyāsya te satī
śaṁbarasya na bhāryeyaṁ śrūyatām atra kāraṇam
manmathe tu gate nāśaṁ tad udbhava-parayaṇā
śaṁbaraṁ mohayām āsa māyā-rūpeṇa rūpiṇī
vihārādy-upabhogeṣu rūpaṁ māyāmayaṁ śubham
darśayām āsa daityasya tasyeyaṁ madirekṣaṇā

This chaste Māyāvatī is the wife of your son. She is not the wife of Śambara. Please listen to the reason. When Kāmadeva was destroyed she desired that he appear again. She bewildered Śambara. By her illusory powers she became most beautiful. She showed the demon a beautiful form made of *māyā* for his enjoyment and recreation.

Hari-vaṁśa says the same. She developed prema for the child. *Hari-vaṁśa* says she gave him nurses. *Rasāyanopayogaiś ca śīghram eva vyavardhayat*: he grew quickly by the use of special tonics.

Text 55.9

nāti-dīrgheṇa kālena sa kārṣṇi rūḍha-yauvanaḥ
janayām āsa nārīṇāṁ vīkṣantīnāṁ ca vibhramam

After a short time, this son of Kṛṣṇa—Pradyumna—attained his full youth. He caused amorous feelings in all women who gazed upon him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He attained *paugaṇḍa* age very quickly and *yauvana* began to manifest, because he was the son of Kṛṣṇa (*kārṣṇi*), with similar youth. Just looking at him, what to speak of speaking with him, others developed intense emotions of love or *unmāda*.

Text 55.10

sā tam patiṁ padma-dalāyatekṣaṇaṁ
pralamba-bāhuṁ nara-loka-sundaram
sa-vrīḍa-hāsottabhita-bhruvekṣatī
prītyopatasthe ratir aṅga sauratairḥ

My dear king, with a bashful smile and raised eyebrows, Māyāvatī exhibited various gestures of conjugal attraction as she lovingly approached her husband, whose eyes were broad like the petals of a lotus, whose arms were very long and who was the most beautiful of men.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Three verses (10-12) describe qualities more outstanding than in his previous age. He was most beautiful in the eyes of all *jīvas* or all people on earth (*nara-lokam*) because of his possession of all beauty, represented by his lotus eyes (*padma-dalekṣanam*), and great strength (*pralamba-bāhum*), represented by his long arms. She approached him with affection, with shy smiles and dancing eyebrows and other conjugal gestures. Because she was shy, the smile was slight.

Text 55.11

tām aha bhagavān kārṣṇir mātas te matir anyathā
mātṛ-bhāvam atikramya vartase kāminī yathā

Pradyumna told her, "O mother, your attitude has changed. You are overstepping the proper feelings of a mother and behaving like a lover."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though he was endowed with all powers like omniscience (*bhagavān*), he spoke in an opposite manner since he was the son of Kṛṣṇa (*kāṛṣṇiḥ*) and thus performed attractive human pastimes in a similar manner. Pradyumna thought of her as a mother. This is described in *Hari-vaṁśa:*

dhātryāḥ sakāśāt sa ca tāṁ śṛṇvan rukmiṇi-nandanaḥ
māyāvatīm avijñānān mene svām eva mātaram

Since Pradyumna heard about it from his nurse, out of ignorance he thought Māyāvatī to be his mother.

He thought in this way because of the nurse, not because of Māyāvatī. The nurse told he was Māyāvatī's son. Because of that information, he would not have called her his mother without some practice as a child. Therefore, he now became angry. "This attitude is different (*anyathā*). You are acting in a different manner." Out of embarrassment he did not say directly what it was, but then in the second part of the verse he describes the situation. "You are transgressing the feelings of a mother and acting like a lover." The real meaning however is "Because of your feelings, you should not act in any other way (*te matir anyathā*), since you are my beloved (*kāminī*). Your feelings surpass those of motherly love (*mātṛ-bhāvam atikramya vartase*)."

Text 55.12

ratir uvāca
bhavān nārāyaṇa-sutaḥ śambareṇa hṛto gṛhāt
ahaṁ te 'dhikṛtā patnī ratiḥ kāmo bhavān prabho

Rati said: You are the son of Nārāyaṇa and you were kidnapped from your parents' home by Śambara. I, Rati, am your legitimate wife, O master, because you are Cupid.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You are the son of Nārāyaṇa, who gives shelter to all beings. You were taken from the maternity ward by Śambara. I am qualified (*adhikṛtā*) as your wife. I am your eternal wife.

Text 55.13

eṣa tvānirdaśaṁ sindhāv akṣipac chambaro 'suraḥ
matsyo 'grasīt tad-udarād itaḥ prāpto bhavān prabho

That demon, Śambara, threw you into the sea when you were not even ten days old, and a fish swallowed you. Then in this very place we recovered you from the fish's abdomen, O master.

COMMENTARY: She described how he was stolen in order to make Pradyumna angry. Why did he throw me in the sea? He was a demon by

nature, an enemy of the *devatās* (*asuraḥ*). He was the chief of the demons, with great illusory powers, or famous as the enemy of Cupid (*asuraḥ*). She addresses him as 'master' to confirm that he is her husband, or to show that he is capable of killing Śambara.

Text 55.14

tam imaṁ jahi durdharṣaṁ durjayaṁ śatrum ātmanaḥ
māyā-śata-vidaṁ taṁ ca māyābhir mohanādibhiḥ

Now kill this dreadful Śambara, your formidable enemy. Although he knows hundreds of magic spells, you can defeat him with bewildering magic and other techniques.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You should kill Śambara, who is now here (*imam*). He is difficult to bewilder (*durdharṣam*) and therefore difficult to conquer. He is suitable to be killed. He is your enemy. *Ādbhiḥ* refers to weapons to dry him up or burn him.

Text 55.15

parīśocati te mātā kurarīva gata-prajā
putra-snehākulā dīnā vivatsā gaur ivāturā

Your poor mother, having lost her son, cries for you like a *kurarī* bird. She is overwhelmed with love for her child, just like a cow that has lost its calf.

COMMENTARY: She laments because she lost her son. Another version has *gatā trapā*: she was shamed by the loss of a son. "She should not lament since she has a powerful husband." She laments out of affection for her son. She is miserable, having lost all happiness and without power to think (*āturā*). She is like a cow which has lost a calf. She laments like an osprey. Or she laments out of great pain, in a miserable voice at all times everywhere (*parīśocati*). Not only does she lament, but has reached a pitiable state. She continually cries (*āturā*). In both meanings, the examples show her great pain.

Text 55.16

prabhāṣyaivaṁ dadau vidyāṁ pradyumnāya mahātmane
māyāvatī mahā-māyāṁ sarva-māyā-vināśinīm

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Speaking thus, Māyāvatī gave to the great soul Pradyumna the mystic knowledge called Mahā-māyā, which vanquishes all other deluding spells.

COMMENTARY: In this way she spoke with passion to Pradyumna who was very intelligent (*mahātmane*). He was capable of learning the knowledge. She had more powers than Śambara. Thus her knowledge was called Mahā-māyā. It could destroy all of the illusions known to Śambara. Or he had unrestricted

power (*mahātmane*). She was bewildered by prema (*māyāvatī*). Though he had all knowledge, she gave him knowledge because of her bewilderment in *prema*.

Text 55.17

sa ca śambaram abhyetya saṁyugāya samāhvayat
aviṣahyais tam ākṣepaiḥ kṣipan sañjanayan kalim

Pradyumna approached Śambara and called him to battle, hurling intolerable insults at him to foment a conflict.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He called out to Śambara him loudly (*sam-āhvayat*), criticizing him with abusive words in order to cause (*sañjanayan*) a quarrel even to death.

Text 55.18

so 'dhikṣipto durvācobhiḥ padāhata ivoragaḥ
niścakrāma gadā-pāṇir amarṣāt tāmra-locanaḥ

Offended by these harsh words, Śambara became as agitated as a kicked snake. He came out, club in hand, his eyes red with rage.

COMMENTARY: He became like a kicked snake. Because of anger his eyes were red. Or angry like a kicked snake raising its hood, with red eyes emerging from its hole, he came out of his house.

Text 55.19

gadām āvidhya tarasā pradyumnāya mahātmane
prakṣipya vyanadan nādaṁ vajra-niṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuram

Śambara whirled his club swiftly about and then hurled it at the wise Pradyumna, producing a sound as sharp as a thunder crack.

COMMENTARY: Whirling the club, he threw it with strength at Pradyumna, who had great forbearance (*mahātmane*) and who was fearless. The club made a great sound like thunder or greater than thunder.

Text 55.20

tām āpatantīṁ bhagavān pradyumno gadayā gadām
apāsya śatrave kruddhaḥ prāhiṇot sva-gadāṁ nṛpa

As Śambara's club came flying toward him, Pradyumna knocked it away with his own. Then, O king, Pradyumna angrily threw his club at the enemy.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Pradyumna threw (*āpasya*) his club at Śambara. That club also made a sound (*nadan*). Instead of *nadan* sometimes *nṛpa* (O king) is seen (as in this version).

Text 55.21

sa ca māyāṁ samāśritya daiteyīṁ maya-darśitam
mumuce 'śma-mayaṁ varṣaṁ kārṣṇau vaihāyaso 'suraḥ

Resorting to the black magic of the Daityas taught to him by Maya Dānava, Śambara suddenly appeared in the sky and released a downpour of rocks upon Kṛṣṇa's son.

COMMENTARY: The word *ca* means "but." He used magic, revealed by Maya, to counter Pradyumna's club. Thus, it was powerful. He took complete shelter of that magic, even disappearing. Then he appeared in the sky and showered countless rocks. *Bhasmībhute vṛkṣavarṣe śilāsaṅghān avarṣayad:* when Pradyumna turned the shower of trees into ashes, he showered

down a host of rocks. (*Hari-vaṁśa*) The shower of rocks was actually illusory.

Text 55.22

bādhyamāno 'śma-varṣeṇa raukmiṇeyo mahā-rathaḥ
sattvātmikāṁ mahā-vidyāṁ sarva-māyopamardinīm

Harassed by this rain of rocks, Pradyumna, the greatly powerful warrior, made use of the mystic science called Mahā-māyā, which was created from the mode of goodness and which could defeat all other mystic power.

COMMENTARY: Pradyumna was the best of great warriors (*mahā-rathaḥ*), since he was born from Rukmiṇī. Thus he defeated the shower of rocks using magic which defeated all illusion.

Text 55.23

tato gauhyaka-gāndharva-paiśācoraga-rākṣasīḥ
prāyuṅkta śataśo daityaḥ kārṣṇir vyadhamayat sa tāḥ

The demon then unleashed hundreds of mystic weapons belonging to the Guhyakas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Uragas and Rākṣasas, but Pradyumna struck them all down.

COMMENTARY: Śambara used many of each type of demon's weapons listed. Or he used their many illusions.

tato māyāṁ parāṁ cakre deva-śatruḥ pratāpavān
siṁhān vyāghrān varāhāṁś ca tarakṣūn ṛkṣa-vānarān
vāraṇān vārida prakhyān hayān uṣṭrān viśāṁ pate

Powerful Śambara used his powerful *māyā,* creating lions, tigers, boars, hyenas, bears, monkeys, elephants, clouds, horses and camels. *Hari-vaṁśa*

The weapons were in the order of ability to accomplish the task using violence (from Guhayaka weapons to Rākṣasa weapons). *Sma* means "it is well known." Pradyumna countered them all successively because he was the son of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 55.24

niśātam asim udyamya sa-kirīṭaṁ sa-kuṇḍalam
śambarasya śiraḥ kāyāt tāmra-śmaśrv ojasāharat

Drawing his sharp-edged sword, Pradyumna forcefully cut off Śambara's head, complete with red mustache, helmet and earrings.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He separated his head from the body, throwing it far away. The red moustache indicates Śambara's terrifying nature. Because of the quickness of the action and to have some fun, Śambara's helmet and earrings were still in place.

Text 55.25

ākīryamāṇo divi-jaiḥ stuvadbhiḥ kusumotkaraiḥ
bhāryayāmbara-cāriṇyā puraṁ nīto vihāyasā

As the residents of the higher planets showered Pradyumna with flowers and chanted his praises, his wife, who could float in the air, transported him through the heavens, back to the city of Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The *devatās* covered him with flowers. Māyāvatī brought him to Dvārakā on the sky path since she had the power to travel through the sky like a *devatā.*

Text 55.26

antaḥ-pura-varaṁ rājan lalanā-śata-saṅkulam
viveśa patnyā gaganād vidyuteva balāhakaḥ

O king, Pradyumna and his wife resembled a cloud accompanied by lightning as they descended from the sky into the inner quarters of Kṛṣṇa's most excellent palace, which were crowded with lovely women.

COMMENTARY: It was the best among all palaces, since it belonged to the Lord or because it was occupied by many women related to the Rukmiṇī, the best of all queens. It was filled with other queens or beautiful women, or the friends of Rukmiṇī. Pradyumna entered with his wife Rati. O king!

Śukadeva exclaims in joy. Or Pradyumna was shining (*rājan*). Suddenly he appeared with his wife, shining black and gold like lightning in a dark cloud.

Texts 55.27–28

taṁ dṛṣṭvā jalada-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam
pralamba-bāhuṁ tāmrākṣaṁ su-smitaṁ rucirānanam
sv-alaṅkṛta-mukhāmbhojaṁ nīla-vakrālakālibhiḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ matvā striyo hrītā nililyus tatra tatra ha

The women of the palace thought he was Kṛṣṇa when they saw his dark-blue complexion the color of a rain cloud, his yellow silk garments, his long arms and red-tinged eyes, his charming lotus face adorned with a pleasing smile, his fine ornaments and his thick, curly blue hair. Thus the women became bashful and hid themselves here and there.

COMMENTARY: Because he was similar to Kṛṣṇa, the women thought he was Kṛṣṇa. He is described by seven phrases. He was dark like a fresh cloud about to shower rain. His eyes were pink at the edges like lotus petals (*tāmrākṣam*—red eyes). This was previously described. He had a charming face. This indicates that his nose and other features were beautiful. He was approaching new youth, with soft qualities. *Dhanyāyāḥ khalu putro 'yam 'vartate navayauvanaḥ*: this son has reached the age of new youth. (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*)

His lotus face was decorated with earrings. The earrings were like bees on a lotus. Successively, the features reminded the women of Kṛṣṇa. Only this much is described to indicate other features of beauty also, since his beauty was extraordinary. Or by that alone, they thought he was Kṛṣṇa.

Or the description indicates his beauty. Yellow cloth shows the skill in ornamentation. His long arms indicate the symmetry of his limbs. His red eyes indicate his beauty. His smile indicates his sweetness. His attractive face indicates the natural beauty of his face and its elements as well as his age. The special beauty of his face is indicated by his locks and earrings. The queens hid themselves here and there, because they were bashful. *Ha* indicates surprise, or "clearly."

Text 55.29

avadhārya śanair īṣad vailakṣaṇyena yoṣitaḥ
upajagmuḥ pramuditāḥ sa-strī ratnaṁ su-vismitāḥ

Gradually, from the slight differences between his appearance and Kṛṣṇa's, the ladies realized he was not the Lord. Delighted and astonished, they approached Pradyumna and his consort, who was a jewel among women.

COMMENTARY: He was slightly different since his color and other features of beauty were slightly less than Kṛṣṇa's, since he, as a son, was like a reflection. Or he did not have the same loving glance. He glanced them with politeness, with bowed head. Gradually, though the two had similar forms, they understood he was not Kṛṣṇa, because he did not immediately manifest *bhāva* for the wives. Or they could not immediately realize the difference by intelligence because of their natural affection and shyness. They then approached, with great joy because of the arousal of parental affection or seeing the similarity to Kṛṣṇa's form. They were astonished since he arrived suddenly and had a similarity to their husband. They did not know that the woman was his wife. Thus she is called a jewel among women.

Text 55.30

atha tatrāsitāpāṅgī vaidarbhī valgu-bhāṣiṇī
asmarat sva-sutaṁ naṣṭaṁ sneha-snuta-payodharā

Seeing Pradyumna, sweet-voiced, dark-eyed Rukmiṇī remembered her lost son, and her breasts became moist out of affection.

COMMENTARY: While the women were looking at him after he arrived, Rukmiṇī, who possessed beautiful glances and spoke in the most pleasing manner, remembered her son, because of the similarity of form. The word *sva* indicates her extreme affection for him. Though a long time had passed since he was born, milk still flowed from her breasts. Though the milk flowed on remembering her son, the two events happened simultaneously. Thus, it is said that the milk flowed and she remembered her son. This indicates her great affection. Or just on seeing him, her milk flowed. Or she remembered him and her milk flowed.

Text 55.31

ko nv ayam nara-vaidūryaḥ kasya vā kamalekṣaṇaḥ
dhṛtaḥ kayā vā jaṭhare keyaṁ labdhā tv anena vā

[Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī-devī said:] Who is this lotus-eyed jewel among men? What man's son is he, and what woman carried him in her womb? And who is this woman who is with him?

COMMENTARY: *Nu* indicates questioning. His gem-like nature is described. He has lotus eyes. This is an indication of a *mahā-puruṣa*. What man's son is he, and what woman carried him in her womb? This shows the greater affection of the mother.

Text 55.32

mama cāpy ātmajo naṣṭo nīto yaḥ sūtikā-gṛhāt
etat-tulya-vayo-rūpo yadi jīvati kutracit

If my lost son, who was kidnapped from the maternity room, were still alive somewhere, he would be of the same age and appearance as this young man.

COMMENTARY: By remembrance of her son by the similarity, her heart became attracted with affection to her son who could not be seen (*naṣṭaḥ*). Nothing is known about who took him. She then wonders. If he were alive, he would be this age with this form.

Text 55.33

kathaṁ tv anena samprāptaṁ sārūpyaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ
ākṛtyāvayavair gatyā svara-hāsāvalokanaiḥ

But how is it that this young man so much resembles my own Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of Śārṅga, in his bodily form and his limbs, in his gait and the tone of his voice, and in his smiling glance?

COMMENTARY: The word *tu* indicates astonishment. She shows how he is exactly like Kṛṣṇa. All of his limbs were similar, with similar height, bodily development and beauty in the body. After Pradyumna came down from the sky, he moved his feet slight so that his gait could be seen. The tone of his voice was understood from his questions to each of the mothers about

their identities when he came close. He was also holding the Śārṅga bow in his hand, or the phrase simply indicates his great courage, and thus his great strength.

Text 55.34

sa eva vā bhaven nūnaṁ yo me garbhe dhṛto 'rbhakaḥ
amuṣmin prītir adhikā vāmaḥ sphurati me bhujaḥ

Yes, he must be the same child I bore in my womb, since I feel great affection for him and my left arm is quivering.

COMMENTARY: *Vā* indicates questioning. *Nūnam* indicates certainty. Since Rukmiṇī is the mother of the universe, she has general affection for all her children. But now she felt additional (*adhikā*) affection. Moreover, her arm was quivering. She speaks these verses in her mind. Otherwise, he would have approached her, introduced himself and bowed to her lotus feet. Or though she spoke aloud, because he arrived so suddenly, she was unable to immediately do or say anything because of doubt.

Text 55.35

evaṁ mīmāṁsamaṇāyāṁ vaidarbhyāṁ devakī-sutaḥ
devaky-ānakadundubhyām uttamaḥ-śloka āgamat

As Rukmiṇī conjectured in this way, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, arrived on the scene with Vasudeva and Devakī.

COMMENTARY: While she was considering in this way, Kṛṣṇa came with Vasudeva and Devakī to give them joy. He is called Uttamaśloka because he is famous for his affection to his friends, or he is praised for driving away ignorance. He arrived to drive away Rukmiṇī's ignorance on this matter.

Text 55.36

vijñātārtho 'pi bhagavāṁs tūṣṇīm āsa janārdanaḥ
nārado 'kathayat sarvaṁ śambarāharaṇādikam

Although Janārdana knew perfectly well what had transpired, he remained silent. The sage Nārada, however, explained everything, beginning with Śambara's kidnapping of the child.

COMMENTARY: Though knowing the truth about this in detail (*vijñāta*) by direct perception, because he is Bhagavān, he remained silent. Past tense is used (he knew) though it was happening at present, because he was recollecting previous events or ascertaining the events. He also gives pain to the demons. He arranged for the killing of Śambara. He was silent to indicate he did not know anything. Rukmiṇī had lamented and would think badly of him if he had known everything without telling her.

Though it is not mentioned that Nārada has arrived, he had come through the air at that time, being omniscient and dear to Kṛṣṇa. Or it can be explained that he was constantly with Kṛṣṇa.

govinda-bhuja-guptāyāṁ dvāravatyāṁ kurūdvaha
avātsīn nārado 'bhīkṣṇaṁ kṛṣṇopāsana-lālasaḥ

O best of the Kurus! Eager to engage in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni stayed constantly in Dvārakā, which was always protected by the arms of Govinda. SB 11.2.1

Nārada explained how Śambara had taken the child, or had thrown him in the ocean, and he also told how he was killed and revealed the identity of Māyāvatī.

Text 55.37

tac chrutvā mahad āścaryaṁ kṛṣṇāntaḥ-pura-yoṣitaḥ
abhyanandan bahūn abdān naṣṭaṁ mṛtam ivāgatam

When the women of Lord Kṛṣṇa's palace heard this most amazing account, they joyfully greeted Pradyumna, who had been lost for many years but who had now returned as if from the dead.

COMMENTARY: All the women of the inner chambers belonging to Kṛṣṇa, directly the Supreme Lord, including unlimited servant girls and friends, welcomed him, praising his glorious actions. Or having recovered him, they were completely happy (*abhyanandan*).

Text 55.38

devakī vasudevaś ca kṛṣṇa-rāmau tathā striyaḥ
dampatī tau pariṣvajya rukmiṇī ca yayur mudam

Devakī, Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and all the women of the palace, especially Queen Rukmiṇī, embraced the young couple and rejoiced.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Devakī is mentioned first since she had most affection as the paternal grandmother. Balarāma is mentioned last since he arrived last. The queens with Rukmiṇī are mentioned at the end because they remained behind in order to embrace him for a long time. Or they arrived late because their great affection made them helpless. Or the women desired to please the couple in front of all the others.

Text 55.39

naṣṭaṁ pradyumnam āyātam ākarṇya dvārakaukasaḥ
aho mṛta ivāyāto bālo diṣṭyeti hābruvan

Hearing that lost Pradyumna had come home, the residents of Dvārakā declared, "Ah, providence has allowed this child to return as if from death!"

COMMENTARY: All the residents of Dvārakā became joyful. *Aho* indicates astonishment. *Ha* indicates joy. By fate, we are most fortunate. *Bālaḥ* here means that though he was at the stage of new youth, out of affection they saw him as an infant, or that in infancy, he had been lost.

Text 55.40

yaṁ vai muhuḥ pitṛ-sarūpa-nijeśa-bhāvās
tan-mātaro yad abhajan raha-rūḍha-bhāvāḥ
citraṁ na tat khalu ramāspada-bimba-bimbe
kāme smare 'kṣa-viṣaye kim utānya-nāryaḥ

It is not astonishing that the palace women, who should have felt maternal affection for Pradyumna, privately felt ecstatic attraction for him as if he were their own Lord. After all, the son exactly resembled his father. Pradyumna was a perfect reflection of the beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, and appeared before their eyes as Cupid himself. Since those on the level of Pradyumna's mother felt

attraction for Kṛṣṇa, then what to speak of how other women felt when they saw him?

COMMENTARY: *Yam* is in reference to *pradyumnam* in the previous verse or can be connected with *tat* in this verse. Other women felt love for he whom the mothers felt love. *Vai* means well known. The mothers felt love for him constantly, though repeatedly they extinguished such feelings with doubts, because of his similarity to their husband. *Raha* (hidden) instead of *rahas* is poetic license. Previously in verse 29 it was mentioned that they were ashamed and hid (*hrītā*). This indicates that they were ashamed of this feeling. Or it is hinted when it is described that they approached him in joy (verse 38). Or this verse itself is the main evidence.

They became absorbed in seeing the reflection of Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna. But their chastity was not broken, for they still considered him the son of Kṛṣṇa (*pitṛ*) and that Kṛṣṇa was the shelter of Lakṣmī. This shows their greatness. By his similarity, their *bhāva* for the Lord arose.

Or the women took Pradyumna as Cupid (*smare*), but without desire (*akāme*). Or through glorifying Pradyumna, the queens' steadiness is glorified. They saw him similar to Kṛṣṇa's form (*bimbe bimbe*). Having desire (*kāme*) without considering good or bad (*asmare*), they had love for their Lord, his father.

Or though he was the object of desire for others' eyes, because of having a *bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa, they did not develop conjugal love for Pradyumna. That is not surprising at all, for they were his mothers. And other women also did not develop such love. That is not surprising also, since they were friends of the mothers.

Chapter Fifty-six
The Syamantaka Jewel

Text 56.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
satrājitaḥ sva-tanayāṁ kṛṣṇāya kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ
syamantakena maṇinā svayam udyamya dattavān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having offended Kṛṣṇa, Satrājit tried as best he could to atone by presenting him with his daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

COMMENTARY: The last chapter ended with a mention of mothers (*mātaraḥ*). How were they married to Kṛṣṇa? The marriage of Satyabhāmā, most dear is described first. Satrājit alone offered his daughter by his own decision or she was his only child (*sva-tanayām*). Kṛṣṇa was he who attracts everyone's heart. Thus she desired to marry him also. Though it is proper to describe the marriage of Jāmbavatī, who was older, and though that marriage was a cause of this marriage, that marriage was accomplished along with the events of this marriage. This will be clear later. Or Kṛṣṇa had special prema for Satyabhāmā.

Text 56.2

śrī-rājovāca
satrājitaḥ kim akarod brahman kṛṣṇasya kilbiṣaḥ
syamantakaḥ kutas tasya kasmād dattā sutā hareḥ

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O *brāhmaṇa,* what did King Satrājit do to offend Kṛṣṇa? Where did he get the Syamantaka jewel, and why did he give his daughter to the Supreme Lord?

COMMENTARY: How did he offend Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord? Why did he give his daughter to Kṛṣṇa? Because Kṛṣṇa removes previous faults (*hareḥ*), no offense remains. O brāhmaṇa, you know everything.

Text 56.3

śrī-śuka uvāca
āsīt satrājitaḥ sūryo bhaktasya paramaḥ sakhā
prītas tasmai maṇiṁ prādāt sa ca tuṣṭaḥ syamantakam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Sūrya, the sun-god, felt great affection for his devotee Satrājit. Acting as his greatest friend, the *devatās* gave him the jewel called Syamantaka as a token of his satisfaction.

COMMENTARY: The sun god was a benefactor (*sakhā*) of Satrājit. Thus he gave him the jewel. He was affectionate by nature and became very satisfied by his worship. He gave the gem to him in a significant way, hanging it around his neck (*prādāt*). *Hari-vaṁśa* describes how the gem was given:

tasyopatiṣṭhataḥ sūryaṁ vivasvān agrataḥ sthitaḥ
aspaṣṭa-mūrtir bhagavāṁs tejo-maṇḍalavān prabhuḥ
atha rājā vivasvantam uvāca sthitam agrataḥ
yathaiva vyomni paśyāmi sadā tvāṁ jyotiṣāṁ pate
tejo-maṇḍalinaṁ devaṁ tathaiva purataḥ sthitam
ko viśeṣo 'sti me tvattaḥ sakhyenopāgatasya vai
etac chrutvā tu bhagavān maṇi-ratnaṁ syamantakam
svakaṇṭhād avamucyaiva ekānte nyastavān vibhuḥ
tato vigrahavantaṁ taṁ dadarśa nṛpatis tadā
prītimān atha taṁ dṛṣṭvā muhūrtaṁ kṛtavān kathām
tam āha praśrito bhūyo vivasvantaṁ sa satrajit
lokān udbhāsayasy etān yena tvaṁ satataṁ prabho
tad etan maṇi-ratnaṁ me bhagavan dātum arhasi
tataḥ syamantaka-maṇiṁ dattavāṁs tasya bhāskaraḥ

When Satrājit arrived at the sun planet, Vivasvān, shining bright so that his form could not be clearly, stood before him. The king spoke to Vivasvān who was in front of him. O lord of light! Just as I see you in the sky, now I see you, shining brightly, in front of me. Having attained your friendship by worship, what is the difference between you and me? Hearing this, Vivasvān took from his neck the Syamantaka jewel and placed it in a separate place. Then Satrājit was able to see the form of the sun god. With affection he spoke to the sun god for some time. Satrājit, surrendering to

him, spoke. “You should give me the gem, by which you illuminate the planets.” Then the sun god gave him the Syamantaka jewel.

Text 56.4

sa taṁ bibhran maṇiṁ kaṇṭhe bhrājamāno yathā raviḥ
praviṣṭo dvārakāṁ rājan tejasā nopalakṣitaḥ

Wearing the jewel on his neck, Satrājit entered Dvārakā. He shone as brightly as the sun itself, O king, and thus he went unrecognized because of the jewel’s effulgence.

COMMENTARY: No one could see Satrājit. Past tense is used because the event took place before the conversation of Śukadeva and Parīkṣit. Or the event was being stated with certainty. He addresses the king in astonishment.

Text 56.5

taṁ vilokya janā dūrāt tejasā muṣṭa-dṛṣṭayaḥ
dīvyate ’kṣair bhagavate śaśaṁsuḥ sūrya-śaṅkitāḥ

As the people looked at Satrājit from a distance, his brilliance blinded them. They presumed he was the sun-god, Sūrya, and went to tell Kṛṣṇa, who was at that time playing dice.

COMMENTARY: The Lord was playing dice. He was doing this without much thought, since he is the Lord, or out of great fun. Though playing among his friends, he knew everything. The people informed him. Thinking it was the sun god, they told Kṛṣṇa.

Text 56.6

nārāyaṇa namas te ’stu śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara
dāmodarāravindākṣa govinda yadu-nandana

[The residents of Dvārakā said:] Obeisances unto you, O Nārāyaṇa, the shelter of the jīvas! O holder of the conch, disc and club, O lotus-eyed Dāmodara, O Govinda, O giver of joy to the Yadu!

COMMENTARY: O shelter of all *jīvas* (*nārāyaṇa*)! Holder of weapons to kill the demons! O Dāmodara, who accepted rope around the waist, controlled by your devotee! Having described his qualities, his form is described. O

lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, most beautiful! Though rarely attained, now by great mercy you are easy to attain. O Govinda, you have appeared on earth (*go*). You give joy to the Yadus. You always sit in their assembly. Or you are most rare, as king of Gokula (*govinda*). No one else resides there. But now you are available as the joy of the Yadus in Dvārakā.

Text 56.7

eṣa āyāti savitā tvāṁ didṛkṣur jagat-pate
muṣṇan gabhasti-cakreṇa nṛṇāṁ cakṣūṁṣi tigma-guḥ

The sun god has come to see you, O Lord of the universe. He is blinding everyone's eyes with his intensely effulgent rays.

COMMENTARY: The sun god desires to see you. "But he cannot give up his job of lighting up the world and come here." O lord of the universe! You protect the universe by your light. What use is he? Or his main goal is to see his master. Or only by the mercy of the master, his desires will be fulfilled. Thus he desires to see you. "But he is not the sun-god." He dazzles our eyes because his rays are intense (*tigma-guh*).

Text 56.8

nanv anvicchanti te mārgaṁ trī-lokyāṁ vibudharṣabhāḥ
jñātvādya gūḍhaṁ yaduṣu draṣṭuṁ tvāṁ yāty ajaḥ prabho

The most exalted devatās in the three worlds are certainly anxious to seek you out, O Lord, now that you have hidden yourself among the Yadu dynasty. Thus the unborn sun-god has come to see you here.

COMMENTARY: The best of the *devatās* in the three worlds like Brahmā search for the process to attain you (*mārgam*), but are far from that attainment. *Nanu* indicates certainty. Or they search continually for you without interest in material happiness. This indicates the rarity of attaining the Lord.

They have found out by some good fortune that you, though secretive, are presently living among the Yadus. The Lord's qualification for coming to the world is indicated; he eternally appears in the world (*ajaḥ*). You are the best of the *devas* because you are eternal. O our lord (*prabho*)! We are fortunate to be your servants.

Text 56.9

śrī-śuka uvāca
niśamya bāla-vacanaṁ prahasyāmbuja-locanaḥ
prāha nāsau ravir devaḥ satrājin maṇinā jvalan

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Hearing these innocent words, the lotus-eyed Lord smiled broadly and said, "This is not the sun-god, but rather Satrājit, who is glowing because of his jewel."

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa smiled in the beginning (*pra-hasya*). Then with the intention of somewhat spreading the correct view, he spoke distinctly (*pra-āha*), with a smiling glance (*ambuja-locanaḥ*). He is not a *devatā* but only a human. Moreover, he is only Satrājit. "Why was Satrājit appearing in this manner?" He shines because of the jewel, given by the sungod. These were the words of children (*bāla-vacanam*). The other inhabitants of Dvārakā could not have such ignorance.

Text 56.10

satrājit sva-gṛhaṁ śrīmat kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalam
praviśya deva-sadane maṇiṁ viprair nyaveśayat

Satrājit entered his opulent home, endowed with auspiciousness. He had qualified *brāhmaṇas* install the Syamantaka jewel in the house's temple room.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He entered his house which was naturally endowed with wealth, since it was within Dvārakā, and had *brāhmaṇas* establish the gem on a special altar in his temple room where he used to worship the sun-god (*deva-sadane*).

Text 56.11

dine dine svarṇa-bhārān aṣṭau sa sṛjati prabho
durbhikṣa-māry-ariṣṭāni sarpādhi-vyādhayo 'śubhāḥ
na santi māyinas tatra yatrāste 'bhyarcito maṇiḥ

O master! Each day the gem would produce eight *bhāras* of gold and the place in which it was kept and properly worshiped would be free of calamities such as famine or untimely death, and also of evils like snake bites, mental and physical disorders and the presence of deceitful persons.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

O Parīkṣit, you are a great devotee (*prabho*)! Therefore you do not care for such wealth! If by chance you obtain wealth, you offer it to the Lord. *Māri* is a pestilence which causes daily death in cities and towns with dense population. *Māyinaḥ* refers to all cheaters. The gem must be worshipped properly. Otherwise it causes great calamity. This will be explained later.

Text 56.12

sa yācito maṇiṁ kvāpi yadu-rājāya śauriṇā
naivārtha-kāmukaḥ prādād yācñā-bhaṅgam atarkayan

On one occasion Kṛṣṇa requested Satrājit to give the jewel to the Yadu king, Ugrasena, but Satrājit was so greedy that he refused. He gave no thought to the seriousness of the offense he committed by denying the Lord's request.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa asked him to give the jewel to Ugrasena, because it was only suitable for a king. Kṛṣṇa did not want it for himself since he was indifferent to it. He only requested, without any attempt at forcefully taking it by violence, since Kṛṣṇa was a person who spread the fame of heroes (*śaurinā*). Satrājit however was greedy for wealth (*artha*), not dharma. Therefore, he did not consider it a fault when he ignored the Lord's request. Since the gem was an excellent article, Satrājit should have previously offered it on his own. But even when the Lord requested, he did not give it. Satrājit did not see that it would produce a great disaster for himself. The word *eva* indicates that repeatedly he was requested but did not give. The verb *prādāt* (really gave) indicates that when requested, he deceived him by pretending he would give it, with such words as "Yes, let him use it."

Text 56.13

tam ekadā maṇiṁ kaṇṭhe pratimucya mahā-prabham
praseno hayam āruhya mṛgāyāṁ vyacarad vane

Once Satrājit's brother, Prasena, having hung the brilliant jewel about his neck, mounted a horse and went hunting in the forest.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He gave the gem to Prasena to fool the Lord. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* explains that Satrājit understood that Kṛṣṇa would ask for the jewel and therefore, because of greed for the jewel, gave it to Prasena, his brother. Prasena covered it with a gold case in order to protect it and hide it from others, and hung it around his neck. Once, he went hunting, wandering about in a special manner—alone and without much ability (*vya-carat*).

Text 56.14

prasenaṁ sa-hayaṁ hatvā maṇim ācchidya keśarī
giriṁ viśan jāmbavatā nihato maṇim icchatā

A lion killed Prasena and his horse and took the jewel. But when the lion entered a mountain cave he was killed by Jāmbavān, who wanted the jewel.

COMMENTARY: The lion killed Prasena because it was very strong and amazing. Jāmbavān killed the lion, tearing him apart with his nails (*nihataḥ*).

Text 56.15

so 'pi cakre kumārasya maṇiṁ krīḍanakaṁ bile
apaśyan bhrātaraṁ bhrātā satrājit paryatapyata

Within the cave Jāmbavān let his young son have the Syamantaka jewel as a toy to play with. Meanwhile Satrājit, not seeing his brother return, became deeply troubled.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The gem served as a toy for Jāmbavān's son, who was in the cave.

Text 56.16

prāyaḥ kṛṣṇena nihato maṇi-grīvo vanaṁ gataḥ
bhrātā mameti tac chrutvā karṇe karṇe 'japan janāḥ

He said, "Kṛṣṇa probably killed my brother, who went to the forest wearing the jewel on his neck." Satrājit's supporters heard this accusation and began whispering it in one another's ears.

COMMENTARY: As a brother, Satrājit had great affection for Prasena. Not seeing him, he lamented. He assumed Kṛṣṇa took it, because he was the Lord or because he had asked for it. He must have killed him by cutting off his head (*nihataḥ*). His followers in the city began to speak rumors.

Text 56.17

bhagavāṁs tad upaśrutya duryaśo liptam ātmani
mārṣṭuṁ prasena-padavīm anvapadyata nāgaraiḥ

When Kṛṣṇa heard this rumor, he wanted to remove the stain on his reputation. So he took some of Dvārakā's citizens with him and set out to retrace Prasena's path.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

When Kṛṣṇa with all the assembly heard this second hand (*upa-śrutya*), through Uddhava and others, he followed Prasena's path with the citizens.

Text 56.18

hataṁ prasenaṁ aśvaṁ ca vīkṣya keśariṇā vane
taṁ cādri-pṛṣṭhe nihatam ṛkṣeṇa dadṛśur janāḥ

In the forest they found Prasena and his horse, both killed by the lion. Further on they found the lion dead on a mountainside, slain by Jāmbavān.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They concluded a lion had killed Prasena and his horse by examining the evidence (*vi-īkṣya*).

The people then saw on top of the mountain inhabited by Jāmbavān the lion (*tam*) killed by Jāmbavān. Thus Kṛṣṇa was cleared of the accusations.

Text 56.19

ṛkṣa-rāja-bilaṁ bhīmam andhena tamasāvṛtam
eko viveśa bhagavān avasthāpya bahiḥ prajāḥ

The Lord stationed his subjects outside the terrifying, pitch-dark cave of the king of the apes, and then he entered alone.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

In order to retrieve the jewel so that he could summon Satrājit and give it back, he followed the tracks of Jāmbavān to the cave. The cave was terrifying because of the darkness (*andhena*) and because it was related to Jāmbavān, an ape. Because of this, he stationed the people of Dvārakā at the mouth of the cave since he is an ocean of mercy (*bhagavān*).

Text 56.20

tatra dṛṣṭvā maṇi-preṣṭhaṁ bāla-krīḍanakaṁ kṛtam
hartuṁ kṛta-matis tasminn avatasthe 'rbhakāntike

There Kṛṣṇa saw that the most precious of jewels had been made into a child's plaything. He waited for an opportunity to take the gem, situated near the child.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Within the cave (*tatra*), seeing the jewel made into a toy, he decided to wait for an opportunity to take it, since the search for it was finished.

Text 56.21

tam apūrvaṁ naraṁ dṛṣṭvā dhātrī cukrośa bhīta-vat
tac chrutvābhyadravat kruddho jāmbavān balināṁ varaḥ

The child's nurse cried out in fear upon seeing that extraordinary person standing before them. Jāmbavān, strongest of the strong, heard her cries and angrily ran toward the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the astonishing or unique person—completely different from anyone else, the nurse cried out as if afraid. She actually had no fear, by the influence of Jāmbavān. Or the word *iva* is just a manner of expression with no particular meaning. She was afraid. Jāmbavān was angry and ran towards Kṛṣṇa since Jāmbavān was the best of strong persons.

Text 56.22

sa vai bhagavatā tena yuyudhe svāmīnātmanaḥ
puruṣam prākṛtaṁ matvā kupito nānubhāva-vit

Unaware of his true position and thinking him an ordinary man, Jāmbavān angrily began fighting with the Supreme Lord, his master.

COMMENTARY: He fought with Kṛṣṇa, endowed with all powers (*bhagavatā)*, and his own master. During Rāma's

appearance, he served Rāma because he was by nature a devotee. He took him as an ordinary human because he was angry, because he did not know Kṛṣṇa's power (*na anubhāva-vit*). Or he fought because he lost his intelligence because of anger.

Text 56.23

dvandva-yuddhaṁ su-tumulam ubhayor vijigīṣatoḥ
āyudhāśma-drumair dorbhiḥ kravyārthe śyenayor iva

The two fought furiously in single combat, each determined to win. Contending against each other with various weapons and then with stones, tree trunks and finally their bare arms, they struggled like two hawks battling over a piece of flesh.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Two verses (23-24) go together. The fight lasted for twenty-eight days (verb in the next verse). The fighting was intense (*sutumulam*), without cessation of attack because each strongly desired to win—the Lord out of the

excitement of pastimes and Jāmbavān out of pride in his great strength. They used each of their two arms.

Text 56.24

āsīt tad aṣṭā-vimśāham itaretara-muṣṭibhiḥ
vajra-niṣpeṣa-paruṣair aviśramam ahar-niśam

The fight went on without rest for twenty-eight days, the two opponents striking each other with their fists, which fell like the cracking blows of lightning.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They also used both fists since, because of fighting many days, all weapons were destroyed. Or they did not have much respect for weapons. They also continued day and night without rest.

Text 56.25

kṛṣṇa-muṣṭi-viniṣpāta niṣpiṣṭāṅgoru bandhanaḥ
kṣīṇa-sattvaḥ svinna-gātras tam āhātīva vismitaḥ

His bulging muscles pummeled by the blows of Kṛṣṇa's fists, his strength faltering and his limbs perspiring, Jāmbavān, greatly astonished, finally spoke to the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa beat him in a special manner: by using two fists without noise, or by using one fist with a huge noise. Jāmbavān was most astonished because he had not seen such abilities manifested in even Rāma.

Text 56.26

jāne tvāṁ saṛva-bhūtānāṁ prāṇa ojaḥ saho balam
viṣṇuṁ purāṇa-puruṣaṁ prabhaviṣṇum adhīśvaram

[Jāmbavān said:] I know now that you are the life air and the sensory, mental and bodily strength of all living beings. You are Viṣṇu, the original person, the supreme, all-powerful controller.

COMMENTARY: Realizing Kṛṣṇa's great strength, Jāmbavān first praised him for his great power. I always know you (*jāne*), or have known you continuously as the life air of all *jīvas*, which maintains their bodies or you are simply their life. I know you as the sensory, mental and bodily strength of all living beings. Since he is the source of all these items, he is considered non-different from them. By your *śakti* you spread everywhere (*viṣṇum*). You exist before Brahmā and others (*purāṇa-puruṣam*). You are famous as Viṣṇu. Famous Vāmana is rejected as his identity (since Viṣṇu is the greatest.) You always have fresh powers (*prabhaviṣṇum*). You are the original controller. Brahmā and others are excluded. The terms are in order of increasing power.

Text 56.27

tvaṁ hi viśva-sṛjām sraṣṭā sṛṣṭānām api yac ca sat
kālaḥ kalayatām īśaḥ para ātmā tathātmanām

You are the ultimate creator of all creators of the universe, and of everything created you are the underlying substance. You are the subduer of all subduers, the Supreme Lord and Supreme Soul of all souls.

COMMENTARY: You alone (*hi*) are the creator of the universe, of Brahmā or the elements. You are the cause (*sat*) of all creations. You are time among controllers (*kalayatām*). Thus you are the Supreme Lord. *Tathā* means all this. Thus you are the *ātmā* or *antaryāmī* of all *jīvas*.

Text 56.28

yasyeṣad-utkalita-roṣa-kaṭākṣa-mokṣair
vartmādiśat kṣubhita-nakra-timiṅgalo 'bdhiḥ
setuḥ kṛtaḥ sva-yaśa ujjvalitā ca laṅkā
rakṣaḥ-śirāṁsi bhuvi petur iṣu-kṣatāni

You are he who impelled the ocean to give way when his sidelong glances, slightly manifesting his anger, disturbed the crocodiles and *timiṅgila* fish within the watery depths. You are he who built a great bridge to establish his fame, who burned down the city of Laṅkā, and whose arrows severed the heads of Rāvaṇa, which then fell to the ground.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Though Hanumān burned (*ujjvalitā*) Laṅkā, it was because of Rāma's powers. Or Rāma caused Laṅkā to be burned. Since you are like this, you are my worshipable Rāma. Or Rāma who is merciful to wretched persons like me, is you alone. Your arrows severed the heads of Rāvaṇa and other Rākṣasas.

Texts 56.29–30

iti vijñāta-vijñānam ṛkṣa-rājānam acyutaḥ
vyājahāra mahā-rāja bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
abhimṛśyāravindākṣaḥ pāṇinā śaṁ-kareṇa tam
kṛpayā parayā bhaktaṁ megha-gambhīrayā girā

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O king, Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed the king of the bears, who had understood the truth. The lotus-eyed son of Devakī touched Jāmbavān with his hand, which bestows all blessings, and spoke to his devotee with sublime compassion, his grave voice deeply resounding like a cloud.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ṛkṣa-rājānam instead of *ṛkṣa-rājam* is poetic license. Though involved in fighting in this way, Kṛṣṇa remained fixed in his affection (*acyutaḥ*) because he was Bhagavān, the son of Devakīā. O king! People like you have also realized this. With the greatest mercy he touched Jāmbavān on all his limbs since he was a devotee, with his hand which bestowed all happiness (s*aṁkareṇa*) while removing the suffering caused by the fight, while looking at him with a joyful, affectionate glance (*aravindākṣaḥ*). Śukadeva describes his voice as resembling rumbling clouds out of longing, on remembering the sweetness of the tone of his voice. Jāmbavān understood what had to be understood—that he had previously been the Lord's servant, and that he himself had special powers. Or he had understood various things about himself.

Text 56.31

maṇi-hetor iha prāptā vayam ṛkṣa-pate bilam
mithyābhiśāpaṁ pramṛjann ātmano maṇināmunā

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is for this jewel, O lord of the bears, that we have come to your cave. I intend to use the jewel to disprove the false accusations against me.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I came to the door of your cave for the jewel. With the jewel I will completely remove suspicion. By seeing Prasena killed by the lion, doubt is removed, but to completely remove doubt, the jewel should be brought back (*pra-mṛjan*). The Lord had considered saying this but for fear of repetition he only hinted at it.

Text 56.32

ity uktaḥ svāṁ duhitaraṁ kanyāṁ jāmbavatīṁ mudā
arhaṇārtham sa maṇinā kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha

Thus addressed, Jāmbavān happily honored Kṛṣṇa by offering him his maiden daughter, Jāmbavatī, together with the jewel.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His daughter had a human form even though he had an animal form. Yet he considered her his (*svām*) daughter. This was possible because as the son of a *devatā*, he could take various forms. She was unmarried (*kanyām*). Because of great affection for her, he named her after himself as Jāmbavatī.

The story is told in *Māthura-hari-vaṁśa*. During the appearance of Rāmacandra, this daughter had been born. Jāmbavān wanted to give her to Rāma alone. Rāma said that since in that *avatāra* he has only one wife as a vow, it was not possible. It would happen during the appearance of Kṛṣṇa. He ordered him to do austerities for this purpose for many days. Remembering that, after a long time he attained his desire after doing his austerities at Govardhana.

Text 56.33

adṛṣṭvā nirgamaṁ śaureḥ praviṣṭasya bilaṁ janāḥ
pratīkṣya dvādaśāhāni duḥkhitāḥ sva-puraṁ yayuḥ

After Śauri had entered the cave, the people of Dvārakā who had accompanied him had waited twelve days without seeing him come out again. Finally they had given up and returned to their city in great sorrow.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Thinking of Vasudeva and others, the people thought it was not proper to stay longer. Those close to Satrājit returned to the city. Though the inhabitants of Dvārakā were grieved, because these particular persons were not intimately associated with Kṛṣṇa, they returned to his city rather than stay at the cave he had entered.

Text 56.34

niśamya devakī devī rukmiṇy ānakadundubhiḥ
suhṛdo jñātayo 'śocan bilāt kṛṣṇam anirgatam

When Devakī, Rukmiṇī-devī, Vasudeva and the Lord's other relatives and friends heard that he had not come out of the cave, they all lamented.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Devī can modify Devakī and Rukmiṇī and indicates they were worthy of worship. They are mentioned first because they had great *prema* and because they represented the highest *śakti.* Vasudeva and others are mentioned afterwards because of lesser *prema. Suhṛdaḥ* can mean relatives or friends.

Text 56.35

satrājitaṁ śapantas te duḥkhitā dvārakaukasaḥ
upatasthuś candrabhāgāṁ durgāṁ kṛṣṇopalabdhaye

Cursing Satrājit, the sorrowful residents of Dvārakā approached the Durgā deity named Candrabhāgā and prayed to her for Kṛṣṇa's return.

COMMENTARY: Devakī and others (*te*) or all of them, taking Kṛṣṇa as their very life (*te*), approached Durgā for quickly attaining Kṛṣṇa, the form of

bliss. Being a special *śakti* of the Lord, she could do this.

Text 56.36

teṣāṁ tu devy-upasthānāt pratyādiṣṭāśiṣā sa ca
prādurbabhūva siddhārthaḥ sa-dāro harṣayan hariḥ

When the citizens had finished worshiping her, the blessings came true. Kṛṣṇa, who had achieved his purpose, appeared suddenly before them in the company of his new wife, filling them with joy.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *tu* indicates an exceptional circumstance. By worshipping *devatās* the Lord does not appear to ordinary people. It is said *devān deva-yajo yānti*: worshippers of *devatās* attain the *devatās.* However, when the people of Dvārakā worshipped Durgā, Kṛṣṇa appeared. In worshipping her, the people had only *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, who himself acted in pastimes with an appearance of ordinary dealings. Durgā attained qualification by the relationship with them. Whatever blessing she gave came true. Kṛṣṇa's goal was to retrieve the jewel, give mercy to Jāmbavān, win Jāmbavatī as a bride, and refute Satrājit's claim. He had attained these goals (*siddharthaḥ*). He appeared with his wife suddenly. Thus it is possible that he came on Garuḍa.

Text 56.37

upalabhya hṛṣīkeśaṁ mṛtaṁ punar ivāgatam
saha patnyā maṇi-grīvaṁ sarve jāta-mahotsavāḥ

Seeing Hṛṣīkeśa return as if from death, accompanied by his new wife and wearing the Syamantaka jewel on his neck, all the people were roused to jubilation.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was the master of their senses (*hṛṣīkeśam*). He inspired their jubilation. He wore the jewel around his neck to dispel the gossip. The festival became greater because it pleased Kṛṣṇa.

Text 56.38

satrājitaṁ samāhūya sabhāyāṁ rāja-sannidhau
prāptiṁ cākhyāya bhagavān maṇiṁ tasmai nyavedayat

Lord Kṛṣṇa summoned Satrājit to the royal assembly. There, in the presence of King Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa announced the recovery of the jewel and then formally presented it to Satrājit.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

With attention he summoned Satrājit, and in the presence of the king, Ugrasena, or all the kings, in order to dispel the false rumors and give joy to all people, he explained the events to all the citizens and even though he had previously requested it for Ugrasena, offered the jewel to Satrājit to show that he had no desire for it, since, as the Lord full of all powers and wealth (*bhagavān*), he had no interest in such things.

Text 56.39

sa cāti-vrīḍito ratnaṁ gṛhītvāvāṅ-mukhas tataḥ
anutapyamāno bhavanam agamat svena pāpmanā

Hanging his head in great shame, Satrājit took the gem and returned home from the assembly, all the while feeling remorse for his sinful behavior, which the Lord took as his own sin.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *ca* means "but." This distinguishes him from the other people who were excellent. He, unlike the others, felt remorse. He then left the assembly (*tataḥ*) and went to his house. The Lord, because of his affection, did not disrespect Satrājit, but accepted the sin as his own (*svena*).

Texts 56.40–42

so 'nudhyāyaṁs tad evāghaṁ balavad-vigrahākulaḥ
kathaṁ mṛjāmy ātma-rajaḥ prasīded vācyutaḥ katham
kim kṛtvā sādhu mahyaṁ syān na śaped vā jano yathā
adīrgha-darśanaṁ kṣudraṁ mūḍhaṁ draviṇa-lolupam
dāsye duhitaraṁ tasmai strī-ratnaṁ ratnam eva ca
upāyo 'yaṁ samīcīnas tasya śāntir na cānyathā

Pondering over his grievous offense and worried about the possibility of conflict with the Lord's mighty devotees, King Satrājit thought, "How can I cleanse myself of my contamination, and how may Acyuta become satisfied with me? What can I do to regain my good fortune and avoid being cursed by the populace for being so short-sighted, miserly, foolish and avaricious? I shall give my daughter, the jewel of all women, to the Lord, together with the Syamantaka jewel. That, indeed, is the only proper way to pacify him."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He thought continually (*anu-dhyāyan*) about his sin, and because it was a great sin, he thought of only that (*eva*) and nothing else. He was overcome with anxiety about conflict with the powerful Lord (*balavat*) or his devotees, because of spreading the rumor. His thoughts are then described.

Kṛṣṇa does not deviate from his nature (*acyutaḥ*). How can I please him? All the people (*janaḥ*) should not curse me because of my bad qualities such as being short-sighted. Thus, this jewel is not suitable for mortals like me. I am low. Therefore though I have obtained it, I should offer the jewel to the Lord. Though he asked for it, I was foolish (*mūḍhaḥ*) and stooped to defaming him. All these qualities have arisen because I was greedy for wealth.

"How will he be satisfied with your daughter and become peaceful?" His peace, his (*tasya*) dissipation of sorrow, or the atonement for my offense (*tasya*), will result from giving the jewel of my daughter and the Syamantaka jewel. No other means, such as killing myself, will produce this atonement.

Text 56.43

evaṁ vyavasito buddhyā satrājit sva-sutāṁ śubhām
maṇiṁ ca svayam udyamya kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha

Having thus intelligently made up his mind, King Satrājit personally arranged to present Kṛṣṇa with his fair daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

COMMENTARY: He determined that he would give his daughter, most excellent (*śubhām*), to Kṛṣṇa. He went personally (*svayam*) to Vasudeva and others and made the request humbly, since he was related to them, or because he had the jewel. Because he did not make the request of her marriage directly to Kṛṣṇa, he was a great offender.

Text 56.44

tāṁ satyabhāmāṁ bhagavān upayeme yathā-vidhi
bahubhir yācitāṁ śīla-rūpaudārya-guṇānvitām

The Lord married Satyabhāmā in a proper religious fashion. Possessed of excellent behavior, along with beauty, broad-mindedness and all other good qualities, she had been sought by many men.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa had also brought home Jāmbavatī and married her but the arrangement did not take place in the same way, according to all the rules (*yathā vidhi*), since Jāmbavān's family was not present. Because she was endowed with great character and beauty, and other accompanying qualities, Satyabhāmā was sought by many others. It will be explained that she had been promised in marriage to Kṛtavarmā and others.

Text 56.45

bhagavān āha na maṇiṁ pratīcchāmo vayaṁ nṛpa
tavāstāṁ deva-bhaktasya vayaṁ ca phala-bhāginaḥ

The Supreme Lord told Satrājit: We do not care to take this jewel back, O king. You are the sun-god's devotee, so let it stay in your possession. Thus we will also enjoy its benefits.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

None of us, including Balarāma will accept this gem. O king (*nṛpa*—protector of people), please protect your people! Kṛṣṇa utters this sarcastically. Whatever good results, seen and unseen, come from this jewel should come to us, since the jewel is my great devotee. Śrīdhara

Svāmī explains that because Satrājit had no sons, the jewel would ultimately come to Kṛṣṇa anyway.

Chapter Fifty-seven
Satrājit Murdered, the Jewel Returned

Text 57.1

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
vijñātārtho 'pi govindo dagdhān ākarṇya pāṇḍavān
kuntīṁ ca kulya-karaṇe saha-rāmo yayau kurūn

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Although Govinda was fully aware of what had actually occurred, when he heard reports that the Pāṇḍavas and Queen Kuntī had burned to death, he went with Balarāma to the kingdom of the Kurus to fulfill the family obligations expected of him.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa understood the facts since he is the controller of the senses (*govindaḥ*). He is the *antaryāmī* of all beings. He went because of family obligations. The word *rāmaḥ* suggests they actually went to please the devotees. *Govinda* also means that he protects the cows. This suggests he is affectionate to his devotees. Thus he went for protecting the Pāṇḍavas.

Text 57.2

bhīṣmaṁ kṛpaṁ sa viduraṁ gāndhārīṁ droṇam eva ca
tulya-duḥkhau ca saṅgamya hā kaṣṭam iti hocatuḥ

The two Lords met with Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Vidura, Gāndhārī and Droṇa. Showing sorrow equal to theirs, they cried out, "Alas, how painful this is!"

COMMENTARY: By showing conviction that the Pāṇḍavas were burned, evil Duryodhana hoped that attempts to find news of the Pāṇḍavas living would cease. The word *ca* indicates all the persons mentioned and Dhṛtarāṣṭra and others. Even Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (*ca*) lamented. Vidura is mentioned with Bhīṣma and Kṛpa because he wanted to comfort them. Or he is mentioned as a secondary figure, because he was a devotee in that group. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are mentioned at the end to show that they showed equal sorrow with Bhīṣma and others. Gathering with them, they cried out loudly (*hā*). The elders such as Bhīṣma are mentioned first.

Gāndhārī was superior to Droṇa. Because he came later, Kṛpa is considered inferior.

Text 57.3

labdhvaitad antaraṁ rājan śatadhanvānam ūcatuḥ
akrūra-kṛtavarmāṇau maniḥ kasmān na gṛhyate

Taking advantage of this opportunity, O king, Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā went to Śatadhanvā and said, "The Syamantaka jewel cannot be taken by an unqualified person."

COMMENTARY: They took advantage of Kṛṣṇa's absence (*etat*). They went to Śatadhanvā because of his wicked nature or to arouse hatred for Satrājit because he gave his daughter who had been promised to him. A person with a bad character cannot take the jewel. Therefore Satrājit should not take it.

Text 57.4

yo 'smabhyaṁ sampratiśrutya kanyā-ratnaṁ vigarhya naḥ
kṛṣṇāyādān na satrājit kasmād bhrātaram anviyāt

"Satrājit promised his jewel-like daughter to us but then gave her to Kṛṣṇa instead, contemptuously neglecting us. Satrājit should follow his brother's path, since he has no heirs."

COMMENTARY: Previously it was said that Satyabhāmā had been desired by many. That is explained in this verse. Previously they had requested her as a bride but she was not given. If she cannot be given now and we cannot accept her, we should take the jewel out of spite. The plural *asmabhyam* is used to indicate that she was even promised to Śatadhanvā. She was promised in marriage many times (s*am*) because she was the best of young women. We all desired her. But Satrājit criticized us, finding fault in us. He gave her to Kṛṣṇa. Saying Kṛṣṇa's name directly here is to show disrespect. He was devious because he promised each one of us. Not obtaining that great jewel, we have suffered greatly. Why should Satrājit not follow his brother? This suggests a curse. This man's brother has died. Being without help, Satrājit will die. If he dies, he had no heir since he had no son (*kasmāt*). The jewel will then be yours. Therefore, you should kill him.

Akrūra, a great devotee of the Lord, spoke in this way because of the anger of the people of Gokula upon him. As a member of the Bhoja dynasty, Kṛtavarmā shared his fault by association.

Or Akrūra actually made no offense to the *gopīs*, since he was a secondary cause of the Lord's leaving Vraja. Kṛṣṇa went by his own will in order to benefit his devotees, the Yadus, by killing Kaṁsa. Akrūra had special *bhāva* for the *gopīs* as expressed in the following:

yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ
go-cāraṇāyānucaraiś carad vane
yad gopikānāṁ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitam

Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and all the other *devatās,* by Lakṣmī and her associates and by devotees in this world, as well as the followers of Pañcarātra. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the forest while herding the cows with his companions, and those feet are smeared with the *kuṅkuma* from the *gopīs'* breasts. SB 10.38.8

samarhaṇaṁ yatra nidhāya kauśikas
tathā baliś cāpa jagat-trayendratām
yad vā vihāre vraja-yoṣitāṁ śramaṁ
sparśena saugandhika-gandhy apānudat

By offering water to that lotus hand, Purandara and Bali earned the status of Indra, and during the pastimes of the *rāsa* dance, the Lord relieved the *gopīs'* fatigue instantly by the touch of his fragrant hand. SB 10.38.17

The following should be understood. When Satrājit spread false rumors about the Lord, the great devotees Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā became very angry. They thus provoked Śatandhanva to kill him, in order to gain his daughter, making Śatadhanvā believe the rumors though Satrājit was a friend. They also intended that Śatadhanvā be killed. Akrūra had no desire to possess the jewel. That is clear later.

Text 57.5

evaṁ bhinna-matis tābhyāṁ satrājitam asattamaḥ
śayānam avadhīl lobhāt sa pāpaḥ kṣīṇa jīvitaḥ

His mind thus influenced by their advice, wicked Śatadhanvā murdered Satrājit in his sleep simply out of greed. In this way the sinful Śatadhanvā shortened his own life span.

COMMENTARY: With his mind deviated from the correct path (*bhinna-matiḥ*) because he was of the demonic nature (*asattmaḥ*), because he had a cruel heart or was inclined to sin (*pāpaḥ*), because his lifespan was short, though born in the Yadu dynasty, he murdered Satrājit.

Or because of his deviated mind, he became wicked (*asattamaḥ*) and sinful (*pāpaḥ*). Or he was naturally wicked and because of that he became sinful and was influenced by the two. Moreover, his life span was short. Thus he killed Satrājit in his sleep.

Text 57.6

strīṇāṁ vikrośamānānāṁ krandantīnām anātha-vat
hatvā paśūn saunika-van maṇim ādāya jagmivān

As the women of Satrājit's palace screamed and helplessly wept, Śatadhanvā took the jewel and left, like a butcher after he has killed some animals.

COMMENTARY: His wicked nature is described. The possessive case of *strīṇāṁ vikrośamānānāṁ krandantīnām* indicates that he was indifferent to their crying and screaming. Or it has a locative meaning, "even though they screamed." Though they appeared to be without a master (*anāthavat*), they had Kṛṣṇa as their master. The example of killing animals suggests his great sin.

Text 57.7

satyabhāmā ca pitaraṁ hataṁ vīkṣya śucārpitā
vyalapat tāta tāteti hā hatāsmīti muhyatī

When Satyabhāmā saw her dead father, she was plunged into grief. Lamenting, "My father, my father! Oh, I am killed!" she became bewildered out to affection for him.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Hearing about the death, Satyabhāmā went there and saw his dead body. She was inundated (*arpitāḥ*) with grief or offered herself to grief. Or she was thrown (*arpitāḥ*) by fate into lamentation. She did not consider the faults of her father out of affection (*muhyatī*). Or she finally fainted. The reason is the *līlā-śakti* which creates a variety of *rasas* in the pastimes.

Text 57.8

taila-droṇyāṁ mṛtaṁ prāsya jagāma gajasāhvayam
kṛṣṇāya viditārthāya taptācakhyau pitur vadham

Queen Satyabhāmā put her father's corpse in a large vat of oil and went to Hastināpura, where she sorrowfully told Kṛṣṇa, who was already aware of the situation, about her father's murder.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because the necessary rites like *śrāddhas,* after burning the body, could not be done, she put his body in oil. Or she did this because she wanted the Lord to bring him to life, or she wanted to show the body to the Lord in order that he grieves and becomes angry. But the Lord already knew the inevitable future results because the jewel had been possessed by the wrong people such as Prasena.

Text 57.9

tad ākarṇyeśvarau rājann anusṛtya nṛ-lokatām
aho naḥ paramaṁ kaṣṭam ity asrākṣau vilepatuḥ

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma heard this news, O king, they exclaimed, "Alas! This is the greatest tragedy for us!" Thus imitating the ways of human society, they lamented, their eyes brimming with tears.

COMMENTARY: Though the two Lords were above the material world, they followed the customs of mankind (*nṛ-lokatām*) by weeping because of separation from relatives, because of the pastimes. Doing otherwise would have looked extremely unsuitable. Or since they were directly the Lords, though in all cases they are without lamentation, to show their unlimited

qualities, they appeared in the human world. They showed affection and lamented.

Their lamentation is described. *Aho* indicates lamentation. We, including Vasudeva and others, have the greatest misfortune since our good friend was killed while sleeping, so that someone could gain wealth by theft. Moreover, this is a cause of shame in society. O king! You should not be surprised that such lamentation and pain for friends arises. Or you know that all this was for pleasing Satyabhāmā.

Text 57.10

āgatya bhagavāṁs tasmāt sa-bhāryaḥ sāgrajaḥ puram
śatadhanvānam ārebhe hantuṁ hartuṁ maṇiṁ tataḥ

The Supreme Lord returned to his capital with his wife and elder brother. After arriving in Dvārakā, he readied himself to kill Śatadhanvā and retrieve the jewel from him.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord who appeared in the world to kill demons (*bhagavān*), went from Hastināpura (*tasmāt*) to Dvārakā. He thus gathered his friends in order that they help him (*ārebhe*), since Kṛtavarmā was assisting Śatadhanvā. He actually announced his efforts to pursue Śatadhanvā to kill him in a solitary place, and favor Akrūra. Thus, he is called Bhagavān, he who is affectionate to his devotee. Though he did this with Balarāma, only Kṛṣṇa is mentioned since he was the main person making arrangements to kill Śatadhanvā. Kṛṣṇa also feared Balarāma.

Text 57.11

so 'pi kṛtodyamaṁ jñātvā bhītaḥ prāṇa-parīpsayā
sāhāyye kṛtavarmāṇam ayācata sa cābravīt

Upon learning that Kṛṣṇa was preparing to kill him, Śatadhanvā was struck with fear. To save his life he approached Kṛtavarmā and begged him for help, but Kṛtavarmā replied as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He desired to save his life only, not his reputation or dharma. He desired to save his life completely (*pari*), with no injury. He had a desire for life which

was almost gone. He went to Kṛtavarmā first, since he was a commander. He doubted Akrūra would help since he was a great devotee.

Texts 57.12–13

nāham īsvarayoḥ kuryāṁ helanaṁ rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ
ko nu kṣemāya kalpeta tayor vṛjinam ācaran
kaṁsaḥ sahānugo 'pīto yad-dveṣāt tyājitaḥ śriyā
jarāsandhaḥ saptadaśa-saṁyugād viratho gataḥ

[Kṛtavarmā said:] I dare not offend the Supreme Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. How can one who troubles them expect any good fortune? Kaṁsa and all his followers lost both their wealth and their lives because of enmity toward them, and after battling them seventeen times Jarāsandha was left without even a chariot.

COMMENTARY: Let others offend them but I cannot. Why? They are full of all powers (*īśvarayoḥ*). Balarāma enjoys battle (*rāma*). Kṛṣṇa takes away the life of enemies (*kṛṣṇayoḥ*). Who is qualified for benefit by obstructing them? Because of hatred for Kṛṣṇa or both of them, Kaṁsa was rejected by a wealth of dharma (*śriyā*). Or he was deprived of wealth by Kṛṣṇa. Because of his hatred for Kṛṣṇa, Jarāsandha was left without a chariot.

Text 57.14

pratyākhyātaḥ sa cākrūraṁ pārṣṇi-grāham ayācata
so 'py āha ko virudhyeta vidvān īśvarayor balam

His appeal refused, Śatadhanvā went to Akrūra and begged him for protection. But Akrūra similarly told him, "Who would oppose the two Lords if he knew their strength?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Pārṣṇi-grāham means help.

Text 57.15

ya idaṁ līlayā viśvaṁ sṛjaty avati hanti ca
ceṣṭāṁ viśva-sṛjo yasya na vidur mohitājayā

“It is the Supreme Lord who creates, maintains and destroys this universe without effort. The cosmic creators cannot even understand his purpose, bewildered as they are by his illusory māyā.

COMMENTARY: The singular is used instead of the dual since Balarāma is included in Kṛṣṇa. Akrūra speaks three verses (15-17). The Lord creates without effort (*līlayā*) this astonishing universe of unlimited variety. What is the purpose? No one can know his (*yasya*) activities (*ceṣṭām*), being bewildered by his (*yasya*) *māyā*. Even Brahmā and others do not know his activities, what to speak of his goal or intentions. This is because of their continuous (*ajayā*) illusion (*mohitā*). Why did you kill Satrājit? Why did you desire to have the jewel kept with me? No one can understand the Lord’s pastimes.

Text 57.16

yaḥ sapta-hāyanaḥ śailam utpāṭyaikena pāṇinā
dadhāra līlayā bāla ucchilīndhram ivārbhakaḥ

“As a child of seven, Kṛṣṇa uprooted an entire mountain and held it aloft as easily as a young boy picks up a mushroom.

COMMENTARY: What to speak of activities of creation? One cannot understand activities like lifting Govardhana, which has been directly witnessed by all at this time. Or “Let him be the Lord. But by accepting to be Yādava, is this not a contradiction between us and him (being equals)?” No, he always shows his powers. At the age of seven (*arbhakaḥ*), he appeared to be a small child (*bālaḥ*). But he lifted the mountain made of rocks rather than dirt and which was very heavy. The rocks were in separate pieces, making them difficult to hold up. But from its very base he uprooted the mountain and lifted it. He did this only with his left hand. And he did it without effort (*līlayā*), just as a child lifts a mushroom.

Text 57.17

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyādbhuta-karmaṇe
anantāyādi-bhūtāya kūṭa-sthāyātmane namaḥ

“I offer my obeisances to the Lord whose actions are amazing, since he is endowed with all powers in full, and is the Supreme Brahman in human

form, who is thus without end and without beginning, and remains unchanged since he dwells within all beings. I offer respects to him."

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Therefore, I offer respects to the Lord who has astonishing activities. The cause of these astonishing activities is that he is Kṛṣṇa, *parabrahman* with a human form. Furthermore, he is Bhagavān, endowed with all powers in full. Therefore, he is unlimited, without end. Furthermore, he is without beginning (*ādi-bhūtāya*). Furthermore, he is without change, even in the midst of creating and destroying since he is the *antaryāmī* of all beings. I again offer respects to him on the ground with great devotion.

Text 57.18

pratyākhyātaḥ sa tenāpi śatadhanvā mahā-maṇim
tasmin nyasyāśvam āruhya śata-yojana-gaṁ yayau

His appeal thus rejected by Akrūra also, Śatadhanvā placed the precious jewel in Akrūra's care and fled on a horse that could travel one hundred yojanas [eight hundred miles].

COMMENTARY: Śatadhanvā, inclined to sin or inspired by Akrūra (*saḥ*), thought that the gem (*mahā-maṇim*) should be possessed by a great person. He therefore deposited it with Akrūra since he thought he was a great devotee. Akrūra accepted it by the order of the Lord according to Śrīdhara Svāmī.

There should be a great result if the jewel is kept with devotion by a great devotee. Otherwise, there will be a disaster. The Lord thought of the welfare of the people.

Text 57.19

garuḍa-dhvajam āruhya rathaṁ rāma-janārdanau
anvayātāṁ mahā-vegair aśvai rājan guru-druham

My dear king, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, mounting Kṛṣṇa's chariot, with Garuḍa as the flag, and which was yoked with tremendously swift horses, pursued their elder's murderer.

COMMENTARY: The chariot moved with the speed of Garuḍa. Balarāma also took pleasure as a friend in the killing of the wicked (*rāma*). Kṛṣṇa was he who gives sorrow to the wicked or he who acts because of the prayers of his devotees (*janārdanau*). Because he had killed an elder, it was proper that Kṛṣṇa chase him and kill him. O shining king! Śukadeva saw Parīkṣit glowing (*rājan*) with joy on hearing this.

Text 57.20

mithilāyām upavane visṛjya patitaṁ hayam
padbhyām adhāvat santrastaḥ kṛṣṇo 'py anvadravad ruṣā

In a garden on the outskirts of Mithilā, the horse Śatadhanvā was riding collapsed. Terrified, he abandoned the horse and began to flee on foot, with Kṛṣṇa in angry pursuit.

COMMENTARY: Because the horse fell down, he was terrified. Thus he fled. Kṛṣṇa ran after him, also on foot (*api*).

The best of warriors will pursue a person who is on foot by also going on foot. "One should not care for a person fleeing quickly in fear. One should not pursue him." But Kṛṣṇa was angry that he had killed a friend.

Text 57.21

padāter bhagavāṁs tasya padātis tigma-neminā
cakreṇa śira utkṛtya vāsasor vyacinon maṇim

As Śatadhanvā fled on foot, the Supreme Lord, also going on foot, cut off his head with his sharp-edged disc. The Lord then searched Śatadhanvā's upper and lower garments for the Syamantaka jewel.

COMMENTARY: Though he was full of all knowledge (*bhagavān*), he searched for the jewel. He cut off his head, throwing it far away. He wanted to show that he heard from the mouth of Śatadhanvā about the jewel, to fool Balarāma, or he did this out of anger.

Text 57.22

alabdha-maṇir āgatya kṛṣṇa āhāgrajāntikam
vṛthā hataḥ śatadhanur maṇis tatra na vidyate

Not finding the jewel, Lord Kṛṣṇa went to his elder brother and said, "We have killed Śatadhanvā uselessly. The jewel isn't here."

COMMENTARY: It is improper to fool an elder brother. Speaking to him directly, Balarāma is only called elder brother with the expression *agrajāntikam.* The jewel is not on Śatadhanvā (*tasmin*).

Text 57.23

tata āha balo nūnaṁ sa maṇiḥ śatadhanvanā
kasmiṁścit puruṣe nyastas tam anveṣa puraṁ vraja

To this Lord Balarāma replied, "Indeed, Śatadhanvā must have placed the jewel in the care of someone. You should return to our city and find that person.

COMMENTARY: After that (*tataḥ*), after a few moments, because he was fooled by the Lord who favored Akrūra, he spoke with great intelligence. He was internally angry, with strong affection (*balaḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa.

Probably (*nūnam*) the jewel was left with some person, some devotee of yours. He speaks out of angry affection.

Text 57.24

ahaṁ vaideham icchāmi draṣṭuṁ priyatamaṁ mama
ity uktvā mithilāṁ rājan viveśa yada-nandanaḥ

"I wish to visit King Videha, who is most dear to me." O king, having said this, Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu, entered the city of Mithilā.

COMMENTARY: "I will see a person who is most dear to me. You go and see who is most dear to you. Your devotees, the Yadus are dear to you. Since the people of Mithilā are generally jñānīs, giving up your devotees, I will association with jñānīs since I disagree with what you have done." He should have gone to Dvārakā to give joy to the Yadus (*yadu-nandanaḥ*). O king, you understand the affectionate anger of the devotees for the Lord. Or you are shining with internal anger in love.

Text 57.25

taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya maithilaḥ prīta-mānasaḥ
arhayāṁ āsa vidhi-vad arhaṇīyaṁ samarhaṇaiḥ

The king of Mithilā immediately rose from his seat when he saw Balarāma approaching. With great love the king honored the supremely worshipable Lord by offering him elaborate worship, as stipulated by scriptural injunctions.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The king rose suddenly because Balarāma came unexpectedly and alone. He worshipped him with the best articles (*samarhaṇaiḥ*) worthy for honoring someone (*arhaṇīyam*). Instead of *arhaṇīyaṁ* sometimes *arhaṇam vai* is seen. *Vai* means famous.

Text 57.26

uvāsa tasyāṁ katicin mithilāyāṁ samā vibhuḥ
mānitaḥ prīti-yuktena janakena mahātmanā
tato 'śikṣad gadāṁ kale dhārtarāṣṭraḥ suyodhanaḥ

The almighty Balarāma stayed in Mithilā for several years, honored by his affectionate devotee Janaka Mahārāja. During that time Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana learned from Balarāma the art of fighting with a club.

COMMENTARY: Though he was particularly the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa (*vibhuḥ*), he stayed in Mithilā (*tasyām*), generally devoid of devotees. Or he, the Lord, stayed there, being worshipped in that way (*tasyām*). Because of anger, because of living there or after that (*tataḥ*), for a long time (*kāle*), since Duryodhana could not learn quickly, he taught him the club on the opportunity of being separated from Kṛṣṇa.

Or at an opportunity suitable for teaching, he did this at the instigation of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was expert at giving bad advice. Suyodhana means one who happily fights. Balarāma was respected by Janaka, who had devotion and who was inclined to *jñāna* (*mahātmanā*), seeing everything equally.

He was different from another person of Mithilā[1] who would go to the Lord. Or by the power of Balarāma's mercy, Janaka's devotion increased.

Text 57.27

keśavo dvārakām etya nidhanaṁ śatadhanvanaḥ
aprāptiṁ ca maṇeḥ prāha priyāyāḥ priya-kṛd vibhuḥ

Keśava arrived in Dvārakā and described the demise of Śatadhanvā and his own failure to find the Syamantaka jewel. He spoke in a way that would please his beloved, Satyabhāmā.

COMMENTARY: He was directly the Lord (*keśavaḥ*), pervading everywhere (*vibhuḥ*) with his unlimited powers. He showed more affection for Satyabhāmā than to Rukmiṇī and Jāmbavatī. He spoke to her about the death of Śatadhanvā, running after him, etc. Or though he was most affectionate to her (*priya-kṛt*), he spoke about not attaining the jewel, since he particularly loved the devotees more than his beloveds (*vibhuḥ*). He was favoring Akrūra. Or he spread the universe with his *māyā* (*vibhuḥ*), fooling even his beloved. Śukadeva with special *bhāva* speaks with envy.

Text 57.28

tataḥ sa kārayām āsa kriyā bandhor hatasya vai
sākaṁ suhṛdbhir bhagavān yā yāḥ syuḥ sāmparāyikīḥ

Kṛṣṇa then had the various funeral rites performed for his deceased relative, Satrājit, along with well-wishers of the family.

COMMENTARY: After that (*tataḥ*), he had all (*yā yāḥ*) the funeral rites performed by Satyabhāmā or a priest for his relative killed (*hatasya*) by a weapon of a thief. *Vai* indicates it was well known, because he was most merciful (*bhagavān*) or the Supreme Lord appearing in the world to spread dharma, to teach people. Or he did these rites even though he is Bhagavān (and does not need to), because he is affectionate to his friends (*bandhoḥ*).

Text 57.29

akrūraḥ kṛtavarmā ca śrutvā śatadhanor vadham
vyūṣatur bhaya-vitrastau dvārakāyāḥ prayojakau

When Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā, who had originally incited Śatadhanvā to commit his crime, heard that he had been killed, they fled Dvārakā in terror and took up residence elsewhere.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The two previously believed that Śatadhanvā would not be killed since he was known as a Yādava. Now, hearing that he had been killed, they were even more terrified (*vi-trastau*).

Text 57.30

akrūre proṣite 'riṣṭāny āsan vai dvārakaukasām
śārīrā mānasās tāpā muhur daivika-bhautikāḥ

In Akrūra's absence ill omens arose in Dvārakā, and the citizens began to suffer continually from physical and mental distresses, as well as from disturbances caused by higher powers and by creatures of the earth.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ariṣṭāni refers to calamities like earthquakes. Another version has *ariṣṭā.* In that case the masculine form is poetic license. There were various sufferings (the verb is understood) of the body and mind which were *ādhyātmika* suffering, caused by one's own body. There were also *daivika* sufferings (caused by nature) and *bhautika* (caused by other living entities) sufferings.

Text 57.31

ity aṅgopadiśanty eke vismṛtya prāg udāhṛtam
muni-vāsa-nivāse kiṁ ghaṭetāriṣṭa-darśanam

Some men proposed that the troubles were due to Akrūra's absence, but they had forgotten the glories of the Supreme Lord, which they themselves had so often described. Indeed, how can calamities occur in a place where the Lord, the residence of all the sages, resides?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Some like Vaiśampāyana, forgetting what they had previously said in praise of the Lord, not remembering this, attributed the calamities to Akrūra's absence. How could calamities happen in the continual residence of the Lord (*nivāse*), who gives shelter (*vāsa*) to all sages? Even if one sage lived there, such calamities could not happen. Even one calamity should not happen, what to speak of many varieties. It should be understood that this

was the will of the Lord. He produced these calamities in order to provide a pretext for bringing back Akrūra.

Text 57.32

deve 'varṣati kāśīśaḥ śvaphalkāyāgatāya vai
sva-sutāṁ gāṇḍinīṁ prādāt tato 'varṣat sma kāśiṣu

[The elders said:] Previously, when Indra had withheld rain from Kāsī [Benares], the king of that city gave his daughter Gāndinī to Śvaphalka, who was then visiting him. It soon rained in the kingdom of Kāśī.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Two verses (32-33) describe what people said. The king of Kāsī gave his excellent daughter along with ornaments and other goods to Akrūra's father, Śvaphalka. The king brought Śvaphalka to Kāsī to marry his daughter. That daughter was famous for coming out of the womb after a long time on the condition that she would perform a daily donation of a cow. Akrūra went to Kāśī since it was the home of his maternal grandfather.

Text 57.33

tat-sutas tat-prabhāvo 'sāv akrūro yatra yatra ha
devo 'bhivarṣate tatra nopatāpā na mārīkāḥ

Wherever his equally powerful son Akrūra stays, Indra will provide sufficient rain. Indeed, that place will be free of miseries and untimely deaths.

COMMENTARY: Wherever that (*asau*) son, who had his father's powers (*tat-prabhāvaḥ*), famous for acts to benefit the whole world, is present, in those places Indra showers rain everywhere.

Text 57.34

iti vṛddha-vacaḥ śrutvā naitāvad iha kāraṇam
iti matvā samānāyya prāhākrūraṁ janārdanaḥ

Hearing these words from the elders, Janārdana, though aware that the absence of Akrūra was not the only cause of the evil omens, had him summoned back to Dvārakā and spoke to him.

COMMENTARY: He then called him back with great respect (*sam-ānāya*) to the assembly. Another version has *samāhūya*. The Lord who is always requested by the devotees so they can see him or who appears because of their prayers (*janārdanaḥ*) called him. This means that Akrūra also was eager to see the Lord. The Lord spoke to him with joy (*prāha*) because Akrūra did not have inner duplicity. That is revealed later.

Texts 57.35–36

pūjayitvābhibhāṣyainaṁ kathayitvā priyāḥ kathāḥ
vijñātākhila-citta jñaḥ smayamāna uvāca ha
nanu dāna-pate nyastas tvayy āste śatadhanvanā
syamantako maniḥ śrīmān viditaḥ pūrvam eva naḥ

Kṛṣṇa honored Akrūra, greeted him confidentially and spoke pleasant words with him. Then the Lord, who was fully aware of Akrūra's heart by virtue of his being the knower of everything, smiled and addressed him: "O master of charity, surely the opulent Syamantaka jewel was left in your care by Śatadhanvā and is still with you. Indeed, we have known this all along.

COMMENTARY: What he said is now described. He spoke asking polite questions. He spoke dear topics (*priya-kathāḥ*) concerning the glories of devotion and devotees. He spoke with joy (*ha*), comforting Akrūra so that he would give the jewel or happy that he had come. He smiled with deep intention, to show that he knew Akrūra had the jewel. His smile arose slightly because he spoke for Akrūra's benefit, though he had arranged the events himself.

Nanu indicates affection or certainty. O lord of wealth! This is uttered with respect. Or we understand the jewel is with you because of your piles of wealth. This will be clarified later. What has been left with me? Out of embarrassment, Kṛṣṇa does not mention the jewel in the beginning. By naming it Syamantaka, no other jewel is meant. Or is Syamantaka a person's name? No, it is a gem (*maniḥ*). I know this jewel which gives wealth (*śrīmān*) or which shines is with you. Because of this, it cannot be hidden for long. It is not possible to hide it now also, since I have known you have it from long before the death of Śatadhanvā. All of us know this. Kṛṣṇa was skillful at covering his favoritism towards Akrūra.

Text 57.37

satrājito 'napatyatvād gṛhṇīyur duhituḥ sutāḥ
dāyaṁ ninīyāpaḥ piṇḍān vimucyarṇaṁ ca śeṣitam

"Since Satrājit had no sons, his daughter's sons should receive his inheritance. They should pay for memorial offerings of water and *piṇḍa,* clear their grandfather's outstanding debts and keep the remainder of the inheritance for themselves.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Kṛṣṇa now resolves the hostility between Akrūra and all others. Satrājit had no sons and no other daughter. Though scriptures say that in the absence of a son or wife, the daughter takes the inheritance rather than the daughter's sons, here Kṛṣṇa says her sons should take the inheritance, not Satyabhāmā. It is understood that Satrājit's wife died along with him.

Texts 57.38–39

tathāpi durdharas tv anyais tvayy āstāṁ su-vrate maṇiḥ
kintu mām agrajaḥ samyaṅ na pratyeti maṇiṁ prati
darśayasva mahā-bhāga bandhūnāṁ śāntim āvaha
avyucchinnā makhās te 'dya vartante rukma-vedayaḥ

"Nevertheless, the jewel should remain in your care, O trustworthy Akrūra, because no one else can keep it safely. But please show the jewel just once, since my elder brother does not fully believe what I have told him about it. In this way, O most fortunate one, you will pacify my relatives. [Everyone knows you have the jewel, for] you are now continually performing sacrifices on altars of gold."

COMMENTARY: You are worthy to keep the jewel because you are fixed in *brahmacarya* (*suvrate*) or because you are fixed in keeping your vow. The Lord had the desire from before that Akrūra keep the jewel for the benefit of the people. Show it to Balarāma so he will believe that it is not with me. He thinks it is with me, though by its function it is with you, my devotee. Though Balarāma did not think like this, Kṛṣṇa makes this statement so that Akrūra would show the jewel. It is understood that Balarāma had by that time returned from Mithilā.

prasādya tu tato rāmo vṛṣṇy-andhaka-mahā-rathaiḥ
ānīto dvārakām eva kṛṣṇena ca mahātmanā

Satisfying Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa had him brought to Dvārakā by great warriors of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas. *Hari-vaṁśa*

O Akrūra, fortunate with devotion to me (*mahābhāga*), or having a portion of devotion to me! You are not interested in the jewel. Thus, just show the jewel but do not give it since it will remain with you only. Why? Showing the gem will completely pacify Balarāma and others, resolving the dissension arising from the jewel.

Text 57.40

evaṁ sāmabhir ālabdhaḥ śvaphalka-tanayo maṇim
ādāya vāsasācchannam dadau sūrya-sama-prabham

Thus shamed by Kṛṣṇa's conciliatory words, the son of Śvaphalka brought out the jewel covered by his cloth, and which shone like the sun and gave it to the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Because he was the son of a sage, he was not interested in the jewel. He also understood the intentions of the Lord. He took the jewel covered by a cloth he wore or other cloth in his hands and gave it to Kṛṣṇa's hands. Uncovered, it shone like the sun.

Text 57.41

syamantakaṁ darśayitvā jñātibhyo raja ātmanaḥ
vimṛjya maṇinā bhūyas tasmai pratyarpayat prabhuḥ

After the almighty Lord had shown the Syamantaka jewel to his relatives, thus dispelling the false accusations against him, he returned it to Akrūra.

COMMENTARY: He showed the jewel to the Yādavas and cleared the accusations (*rajaḥ*) created by the jewel. Because he was the Lord, it was the proper action to teach the population. Akrūra placed the jewel around his neck and went away. *Hari-vaṁśa* says:

sa kṛṣṇa-hastāt saṁprāpya maṇi-ratnaṁ syamantakam
ābadhya gāndinī-putro virarājāṁśumān iva

Taking the gem from Kṛṣṇa's hand, Akrūra put it on his neck and it shone like the sun.

In order to show the uselessness of wealth, not only with the Lord but with the best devotees who act for the benefit of the people, Satrājit and others acted in this way. Otherwise the Yadus would not have acted in this way. Thus the killing of Satrājit was illusory. The conclusion is discussed in *Bhāgavatāmṛta.*

Text 57.42

yas tv etad bhagavata īśvarasya viṣṇor
vīryāḍhyaṁ vṛjina-haraṁ su-maṅgalaṁ ca
ākhyānaṁ paṭhati śṛṇoty anusmared vā
duṣkīrtiṁ duritam apohya yāti śāntim

Anyone who recites, hears or remembers this narration, rich with descriptions of the prowess of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, capable of all actions and spread everywhere by his powers—stories which destroy saṁsāra and increase bhakti, destroys his sins and becomes fixed in Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: This pastime of the Lord, with clearing the false rumors about the Lord, heard by some method, destroys all inauspiciousness and produces all auspiciousness. The word *tu* indicates a different topic or is an ornament of speech.

The Lord is full of all powers as Kṛṣṇa (*bhagavataḥ*), able to do everything (*īśvarasya*), and spreads everywhere by his powers (*viṣṇoh*). One who recites, hears or remembers after hearing (*anu*) or even without reciting or hearing simply remembers this story of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, capable of doing everything and spreading everywhere, stories filled with astonishing actions (*vīrya*), which destroy the suffering of *saṁsāra*, and create the highest auspiciousness by increasing *bhakti* to the Lord, drives away all infamy and attains happiness of the heart (*śāntim*) or steadiness in thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

---

[1] Śrutadeva, a devotee, was a *brāhmaṇa* of Mithilā when Kṛṣṇa visited.

Chapter Fifty-eight
Kṛṣṇa Marries Five Princesses

Text 58.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
ekadā pāṇḍavān draṣṭuṁ pratītān puruṣottamaḥ
indraprasthaṁ gataḥ śrīmān yuyudhānādibhir vṛtaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, glorious in being accompanied by Sātyaki and others, the best of men went to Indraprastha to visit the Pāṇḍavas, who had again appeared in public.

COMMENTARY: Having finished the side story in starting to narrate the various marriages of the Lord, Śukadeva continues that narration. He describes the marriage to Kālindī. Kṛṣṇa, who had all qualities of a good person, such as affection for devotees (*puruṣottamaḥ*), went to Indraprastha when the Pāṇḍavas were visible there (*pratītān*), to see them. Previously the Pāṇḍavas lived with Duryodhana in Hastināpura, but after marrying Draupadī at her father's house, by the order of Bhīṣma, Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave them half the kingdom. This is described in detail in the Ādi-parva of Mahābhārata.

Kṛṣṇa was glorious with great wealth. He went to give them all wealth, since they had suffered for a long time. He went with Sātyaki because he was a main Yadu and dear to the Pāṇḍavas. Balarāma did not go. Being the guru of Duryodhana, he was not particularly friendly with the Pāṇḍavas. Or his association was not proper when Kṛṣṇa was to marry Kālindī.

Or Kṛṣṇa went to see the Pāṇḍavas who now come *(itān*) to (*prati*) Indraprastha.

Text 58.2

dṛṣṭvā tam āgataṁ pārthā mukundam akhileśvaram
uttasthur yugapad vīrāḥ prāṇā mukhyam ivāgatam

When the Pāṇḍavas saw that Mukunda had arrived, those heroic sons of Pṛthā all stood up at once, like the senses responding to the return of the life air.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was the Lord of all (*akhileśvaram*), but came to their house. He is called Mukunda because just by seeing him they felt the highest bliss. Seeing him, they all rose up at once from their seats. Or after not seeing him for a long time, they came back to life as if from dying. They were sons of his paternal aunt (*pārthāḥ*) and greatly endowed with *bhakti* (*vīrāḥ*), capable of attaining the unattainable. An example of rising together is given. The *prāṇa* which has almost departed because of injury, again returns and becomes active as if standing up.

Text 58.3

pariṣvajyācyutaṁ vīrā aṅga-saṅga-hatainasaḥ
sānurāga-smitaṁ vaktraṁ vīkṣya tasya mudaṁ yayuḥ

The heroes embraced Acyuta, and the touch of his body freed them from grief. Looking at his affectionate, smiling face, they were overwhelmed with joy.

COMMENTARY: They embraced him because they were the best devotees (*vīrāḥ*). He also did not fail to embrace them or to give them the highest bliss (*acyutam*). Or absorbed in embracing them, he did not have them fall from his chest. They became free of *saṁsāra* or the sorrow caused by it (*enasaḥ*).

Seeing his face, they became joyful. His face then smiled with great love for them. Seeing his face smiling with affection, they became blissful because of his natural beauty or because of considering his mercy upon them.

Text 58.4

yudhiṣṭhirasya bhīmasya kṛtvā pādābhivandanam
phālgunaṁ parirabhyātha yamābhyāṁ cābhivanditaḥ

After the Lord bowed down at the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma and firmly embraced Arjuna, he accepted obeisances from the twin brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva.

COMMENTARY: In the confusion of prema they could only embrace and were unable to give blessings. Or seeing that they did not do the formalities out of shyness, to teach the public, he personally acted

according to etiquette. He bowed to the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma. Then he embraced Arjuna, but not showing special affection for him.

Text 58.5

paramāsana āsīnaṁ kṛṣṇā kṛṣṇam aninditā
navoḍhā vrīḍitā kiñcic chanair etyābhyavandata

Faultless Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas' newly married wife, slowly and somewhat timidly approached Kṛṣṇa, who sat on an exalted seat, and offered him her obeisances.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was seated in the best seat. By the order of the Lord, the Pāṇḍavas sat on their individual seats. Because Draupadī had the same name (Kṛṣṇā) as Kṛṣṇa, they were friends. Kṛṣṇa attracted her heart with love. She approached "somewhat" shyly because she was newly married or because of her chaste nature. She did not have strong shyness since she did not have conjugal feelings for him. She was not able to maintain shyness because of the nature of seeing him or because she lost control. Or because of shyness she slowly greeted him, offering obeisances with five limbs and slightly touching his feet.

Text 58.6

tathaiva sātyakiḥ pārthaiḥ pūjitaś cābhivanditaḥ
niṣasādāsane 'nye ca pūjitāḥ paryupāsata

Sātyaki also accepted a seat of honor after receiving worship and welcome from the Pāṇḍavas, and the Lord's other companions, being duly honored, sat down in various places.

COMMENTARY: In the same manner (though it is not mentioned) Sātyaki was worshipped. Or as Kṛṣṇa was embraced, he was embraced. He was worshipped and welcomed as a guest according to rules, making him comfortable. Or they had him happy with praises. Served by fanning (*paryupāsata*), others sat down. Or others sat (*āsitāḥ*) closely (*upa*) in the four directions (*pari*).

Text 58.7

pṛthām samāgatya kṛtābhivādanas
tayāti-hārdārdra-dṛśābhirambhitaḥ
āpṛṣṭavāṁs tāṁ kuśalaṁ saha-snuṣāṁ
pitṛ-ṣvasāram paripṛṣṭa-bāndhavaḥ

The Lord then went to see his aunt, Queen Kuntī. He bowed down to her and she embraced him, her eyes moist with great affection. Kṛṣṇa inquired from her along with her daughter-in-law, Draupadī, about their welfare, and they in turn questioned him at length about his relatives [in Dvārakā].

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Draupadī lived in a separate part of the palace as the one wife of all the Pāṇḍavas. When Kṛṣṇa suddenly arrived, he met with the Pāṇḍavas and later met Draupadī. Going within the rooms attached to the palace, he then met Kuntī. He offered respects while announcing his name (*abhivadanaḥ*). He asked her in detail (*āpṛṣṭavān*) since she was his aunt. They asked him about his relatives such as Balarāma. Kṛṣṇa did not ask Draupadī questions since she was newly married and bashful. He instead asked Kuntī.

Text 58.8

tam āha prema-vaiklavya-ruddha-kaṇṭhāśru-locanā
smarantī tān bahūn kleśān kleśāpāyātma-darśanam

So overcome by love that her throat choked up and her eyes filled with tears, Queen Kuntī remembered the many troubles she and her sons had endured. Thus she addressed Kṛṣṇa, who appears before his devotees to drive away their distress.

COMMENTARY: Remembering the many famous sufferings of the relatives (*kleśān*), such as Duryodhana administering poison to Bhīma, with the arousal of a feeling of helplessness, she was overcome with *prema* and then spoke to Kṛṣṇa. He now showed himself, not during the suffering, but when they had attained a kingdom, after the destruction of suffering (*kleśāpāyātma-darśanam*). Or by showing himself, now no more suffering would occur in the future. She became joyful.

Text 58.9

tadaiva kuśalaṁ no ʼbhūt sa-nāthās te kṛtā vayam
jñatīn naḥ smaratā kṛṣṇa bhrātā me preṣitas tvayā

[Queen Kuntī said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, our welfare was assured only when you remembered us, your relatives, and gave us your protection by sending my brother to visit us.

COMMENTARY: These sufferings were overcome by your mercy. We were protected by you who remembers us relatives, though we are not qualified to be relatives (*jñātīn naḥ*). You sent the most affectionate person, who acted as my brother (Akrūra). That was suitable to you since you manifest unlimited qualities like affection for your devotees (*kṛṣṇa*).

Text 58.10

na te ʼsti sva-para-bhrāntir viśvasya suhṛd-ātmanaḥ
tathāpi smaratāṁ śaśvat kleśān haṁsi hṛdi sthitaḥ

For you, the well-wishing friend and Supreme Soul of the universe, there is never any illusion of "us" and "them." Yet even so, residing within the hearts of all, you eradicate the sufferings of those who remember you constantly.

COMMENTARY: As the Lord, though you are equal to all, you show mercy to the devotees. You are the soul of the universe (*ātmanaḥ viśvasya*) and are thus situated at all times in the hearts of persons who even once remember you, and again and again you destroy their suffering since the sufferings of *saṁsāra* come again and again.

Or though you are the friend and soul of the universe, is your mind not fixed (*bhrāntiḥ*) on your devotee (*sva-para*)? It is. Though you are situated in the hearts of all beings as antaryāmī, for those who remember you, not for the non-devotees, or for those who just remember you, what to speak those who perform all nine types of *bhakti*, you destroy suffering in an extraordinary way, at the root. You do not destroy the suffering for the non-devotees.

Text 58.11

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
kiṁ na ācaritaṁ śreyo na vedāham adhīśvara
yogeśvarāṇāṁ durdarśo yan no dṛṣṭaḥ ku-medhasām

King Yudhiṣṭhira said: O supreme controller, I do not know what pious deeds we, devoid of *bhakti,* have done so that we can see you, whom even the masters of bhakti rarely see.

COMMENTARY: Hearing of the Lord's affection for his devotee, Yudhiṣṭhira describes the Lord's affection for the most fallen, taking shelter of humility, while thinking of himself unqualified as a devotee because of his modest nature. I, the son of Dharma, the eldest brother, do not know what pious acts we have done. Or let others know. I do not know. He mocks those who think they are knowledgeable. Why? O supremely independent (*adhīśvara*)! You are not seen even in the hearts of experts at *samādhi* (*yogeśvarānām*). Or O lord of suffering persons like us (*adhīśvara*)! O protector! Or O Lord who reveals his additional powers (*adhīśvara*)! You are seen by the best of devotees only when they suffer (*dur*). You become visible only after a long time and great suffering. I do not know the pious acts by which you are seen by us, devoid of *bhakti* (*kumedhasām*). We do not have the piety of great *bhakti*. We can see you only because you are affectionate to the lowest.

Text 58.12

iti vai vārṣikān māsān rājñā so 'bhyarthitaḥ sukham
janayan nayanānandam indraprasthaukasāṁ vibhuḥ

Requested by the king to stay with them, the almighty Lord remained happily in Indraprastha during the months of the rainy season, giving joy to the eyes of the city's residents.

COMMENTARY: Requested in this way (*iti*), for the monsoon months he produced happiness to the eyes for all the people of Indraprastha, because they could see his beauty. This was because he was able to give joy to the universe (*prabhuḥ*). Or the reason for the request was that he was the king's master (*prabhuḥ*).

Texts 58.13–14

ekadā ratham āruhya vijayo vānara-dhvajam
gāṇḍīvaṁ dhanur ādāya tūṇau cākṣaya-sāyak au
sākaṁ kṛṣṇena sannaddho vihartuṁ vipinaṁ mahat
bahu-vyāla-mṛgākīrṇaṁ prāviśat para-vīra-hā

Once Arjuna, the slayer of powerful enemies, donned his armor, mounted his chariot flying the flag of Hanumān, took up his Gāṇḍīva bow and his two inexhaustible quivers, and went to sport with Kṛṣṇa in a large forest filled with fierce animals.

COMMENTARY: This event took place after the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, since Arjuna now had Gāṇḍīva bow, which he obtained from that incident. They entered the forest to sport in joy. His name indicates that he conquered all completely (*vijayaḥ*). Arjuna was victorious even over chariots. This is indicated by his flag of Hanumān. He held his bow which was made the earth roar (*gāṇḍīva*). He wore armor (s*annaddhaḥ*). He entered the forest which was huge or thick. He went with Kṛṣṇa, who attracted the heart by his friendship. Mounting one chariot, the two entered the forest. He had no fear or showed his power to kill other great warriors (*para-vīra-hā*). Thus he was a conqueror (*vijayaḥ*).

Text 58.15

tatrāvidhyac charair vyāghrān śūkarān mahiṣān rurūn
śarabhān gavayān khaḍgān hariṇān śaśa-śallakān

With his arrows Arjuna shot tigers, boars and buffalo in that forest, along with *rurus, śarabhas*, *gavayas,* rhinoceroses, black deer, rabbits and porcupines.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Ruru is a type of deer. *Śarabha* has eight feet. *Gavaya* is similar to a cow. *Khaḍga* is a rhinoceros.

Text 58.16

tān ninyuḥ kiṅkarā rājñe medhyān parvaṇy upāgate
tṛṭ-parītaḥ pariśrānto bibhatsur yamunām agāt

A crew of servants carried to King Yudhiṣṭhira the slain animals fit to be offered in sacrifice on some special occasion. Then, feeling thirsty and tired, Arjuna went to the bank of the Yamunā.

COMMENTARY: The servants of Arjuna or the king offered the pure animals to the king, who followed the rules of a king. This excludes tigers, etc. They did not kill to eat the animals, but to offer at the special *śrāddhā* rites. Completely thirsty because of being completely fatigued, he who rejects bad acts (*bībhatsuḥ*) went to the Yamunā. This indicates he had no desire for Kālindī.

Text 58.17

tatropaspṛśya viśadaṁ pītvā vāri mahā-rathau
kṛṣṇau dadṛśatuḥ kanyāṁ carantīṁ cāru-darśanām

After the two Kṛṣṇas bathed there, they drank the river's clear water. The great warriors then saw an attractive young girl walking nearby.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The two were standing in a high chariot (*mahā-rathau*) so that they could see a great distance. They saw an attractive girl moving about (*carantīm*), trying to hide herself on hearing the sound of the chariot, or they saw a girl performing (*carantīm*) austerities in order to concentrate her mind on Kṛṣṇa. In either case it is not said that she saw them. They saw her only. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa are called two Kṛsṇas because they were attracted to each other by mutual friendship. The girl had a most beautiful form (*cāru-darśanām*).

Text 58.18

tām āsādya varārohāṁ su-dvijāṁ rucirānanām
papraccha preṣitaḥ sakhyā phālgunaḥ pramadottamām

Sent by his friend, Arjuna approached the exceptional young woman, who possessed beautiful hips, fine teeth and a lovely face, and inquired from her as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

She is described. Her great beauty (*pramadottamām*) is indicated without describing everything. Arjuna was sent by Kṛṣṇa. He did not approach her out of a desire on his part. Because he was a friend of Kṛṣṇa he acted without reservation. Arjuna got off the chariot and approached her. Kṛṣṇa sent Arjuna because he had a desire to have her as his wife. In any other circumstance, he would have approached her personally.

Text 58.19

kā tvaṁ kasyāsi su-śroṇi kuto vā kiṁ cikīrṣasi
manye tvāṁ patim icchantīṁ sarvaṁ kathaya śobhane

[Arjuna said:] Who are you, O fine-waisted lady? Whose daughter are you, and where do you come from? What are you doing here? I think you must be looking for a husband. Please explain everything, O beautiful one.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Who are you—are you a *devatā* or human being and what is your name? Whose daughter are you? From which place (*kutaḥ*) have you come—where do you live? Or, for what purpose (*kutaḥ*) are you here? What do you desire to do? You are unmarried. I think that you desire to have a husband. You are the most beautiful (*suśroṇī*)! You have the best qualities (*suśobhane*). You desire a husband with similar qualities. Arjuna saw her as a sister. When she is described as having fine hips (*varārohām*) in the previous verse, it is only with that intention. Please reply to all my questions. Instead of *sarvam* sometimes *kanyām* is seen. Another meaning of *suśobhane* is "You should speak in a beautiful manner."

Text 58.20

śrī-kālindy uvāca
ahaṁ devasya savitur duhitā patim icchatī
viṣṇuṁ vareṇyaṁ vara-daṁ tapaḥ paramam āsthitaḥ

Śrī Kālindī said: I am the daughter of the sun-god. I desire to get as my husband the most excellent and munificent person who spreads himself everywhere, and to that end I am performing severe penances.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

She reveals her desire immediately, worrying that he would suggest someone other than her desired man. Out of respect she describes her father as *devasya*. This indicates she is also a *devatā*. I desire as a husband only he who spreads himself everywhere (*viṣṇum*), who is the best, and who bestows all desires.

Text 58.21

nānyaṁ patiṁ vṛṇe vīra tam ṛte śrī-niketanam
tuṣyatāṁ me sa bhagavān mukundo 'nātha-saṁśrayaḥ

I will accept no husband other than him, the abode of the goddess of fortune. May that Mukunda, the Supreme Lord, the shelter of the helpless, be pleased with me.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Lakṣmī always remains on his chest out of *prema.* Or he gives shelter to even Lakṣmī who shelters wealth. Who would not accept him? Or he is the shelter of all wealth. This excluded others such as Brahmā and Śiva. O hero of dharma! I do not desire anyone else. "But he is rarely achieved." But he will accept me because he is affectionate to the miserable. May he be pleased with me since he is endowed with all qualities like compassion (*bhagavān*) and delivers everyone from suffering (*mukundaḥ*). Moreover, he is the shelter for those with no other master.

Or even though he is the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*), may he be pleased with me since he is the shelter of those with no master. "Why do you have such determination for him?" He will free me from misery by freeing me from other desires (*mukundaḥ*).

Or, he is Kṛṣṇa, manifesting directly all unlimited powers (*bhagavān*). Being the shelter of those with no master, he alone gives the best results even to the demons, giving them liberation (*mukundaḥ*). He is thus better than the Lords of Vaikuṇṭha.

The conversation between Yamarāja and Yamunā is also rejected as contradictory.[1]

evaṁ vadanti rājarṣe ṛṣayaḥ ke ca nānvitāḥ
yat sva-vāco virudhyeta nūnaṁ te na smaranty uta

Such is the account given by some sages, O wise king, but those who speak in this illogical way are contradicting themselves, having forgotten their own previous statements. SB 10.77.30

There are two forms of Yamunā. One is the direct form who is the consort of the Lord and the other is the shadow form who is the wife of the ocean. The consort form stays in Dvārakā. The shadow form was pulled by Balarāma and then praised him. If this form pulled by Balarāma had been Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort, it would indicate a frightful afterlife for the one who appears to protect dharma.

Text 58.22

kālindīti samākhyātā vasāmi yamunā-jale
nirmite bhavane pitrā yāvad acyuta-darśanam

I am known as Kālindī, and I live in a mansion my father built for me within the water of the Yamunā. There I will stay until I meet Acyuta.

COMMENTARY: She then answers the questions. Kālindī means she is the figurative daughter of Kalinda Mountain (since Yamunā River arises from that mountain). This is my name (*samākhyatā*). Other names like Kṛṣṇā are secondary. Why do you live in the water? I live there in a palace built by my father. This answers the question *kutaḥ* (where). Since my father was the best of *devatās*, he could build the house in the water. Thus, it was excellent, built out of affection. In that place, I am not bewildered. The goal of my austerities is to see the Lord, who does not deviate from his promise (*acyuta*). *Na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*: I declare that my devotee will not be vanquished. (BG 9.31)

Text 58.23

tathāvadad guḍākeśo vāsudevāya so 'pi tām
ratham āropya tad-vidvān dharma-rājam upāgamat

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Arjuna repeated all this to Vāsudeva, who was already aware of it. The Lord then took Kālindī onto his chariot and went back to see King Yudhiṣṭhira.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna repeated what she said. How? He had conquered *māyā* (*gudākeśaḥ*). He did it out of affection for his cousin, the son of Vasudeva. But Kṛṣṇa already knew. She is fully dedicated to me only. Thus, it is not proper to give her to Arjuna. It is also not suitable to ignore the criticism of being touched by lust by accepting many women in marriage. I will instruct all people by first sending Arjuna. He considered this first before sending Arjuna. Knowing dharma, the king will understand everything (*dharma-rājam*).

Text 58.24

yadaiva kṛṣṇaḥ sandiṣṭaḥ pārthānāṁ paramādbutam
kārayām āsa nagaraṁ vicitraṁ viśvakarmaṇā

[Describing a previous incident, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:] Upon the request of the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa had Viśvakarmā build them a most wonderful and amazing city.

COMMENTARY: The Lord acted for the benefit of the Pāṇḍavas in another way. This is a previous incident, explained in four verses (24-27). Only because of the Pāṇḍavas request (*eva*), he who is directly Svayam Bhagavān (*kṛṣṇaḥ*) had the city built by Viśvakarmā. It was most astonishing, indescribable or beyond all human capacity, because it was endowed with the various beauties of the fourteen worlds. It was greater than Indra's city.

Text 58.25

bhagavāṁs tatra nivasan svānāṁ priya-cikīrṣayā
agnaye khāṇḍavaṁ dātum arjunasyāsa sārathiḥ

The Supreme Lord stayed in that city for some time to please his devotees. On one occasion, Kṛṣṇa wanted to give the Khāṇḍava forest as a gift to Agni, and so the Lord became Arjuna's charioteer.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The Lord stayed there a long time happily (*ni-vāsan).* He became Arjuna's charioteer so Arjuna could gain his bow. This was a side effect of giving the forest to Agni.

Text 58.26

so 'gnis tuṣṭo dhanur adād dhayān śvetān rathaṁ nṛpa
arjunāyākṣayau tūṇau varma cābhedyam astribhiḥ

Being pleased, O king, Agni presented Arjuna with a bow, a set of white horses, a chariot, a pair of inexhaustible quivers, and armor that no fighter could pierce with weapons.

COMMENTARY: Having devoured the Khāṇḍava forest (*saḥ*), Agni gave to Arjuna a white chariot along with white horses. The chariot was white since it was decorated with many pearl garlands and the white flag of Hanumān. O king! Śukadeva shouts in joy at the attainments of Parīkṣit's grandfather.

Text 58.27

mayaś ca mocito vahneḥ sabhāṁ sakhya upāharat
yasmin duryodhanasyāsīj jala-sthala-dṛśi-bhramaḥ

When the demon Maya was saved from the fire, Maya presented to his friend an assembly hall, in which Duryodhana would later mistake water for a solid floor.

COMMENTARY: The Lord saved the demon, and the demon gave the friend of Arjuna or the friend of the Lord the hall. Or he gave the hall out of friendship with the Pāṇḍavas. This was different from the Sudharmā hall of Dvārakā. It is further described: Duryodhana would mistake water for land.

Text 58.28

sa tena samanujñātaḥ suhṛdbhiś cānumoditaḥ
āyayau dvārakāṁ bhūyaḥ sātyaki-pramakhair vṛtaḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa, given leave by Yudhiṣṭhira and other well-wishing relatives and friends, returned to Dvārakā with Sātyaki and the rest of his entourage.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After speaking of previous events, Śukadeva returns to the events after receiving Kālindī. He received definite permission (*sam-anujñātaḥ*) from Yudhiṣṭhira (*tena*), after repeatedly asking. He did not go previously because he understood affectionate Yudhiṣṭhira's unwillingness to let him leave. Arjuna and others (*suhṛdbhiḥ*) also permitted this. The word *saḥ* (he) also indicates that Kṛṣṇa went with Kālindī, whom he would marry.

Text 58.29

athopayeme kālindīṁ su-puṇya-rtv-ṛkṣa ūrjite
vitanvan paramānandaṁ svānāṁ parama-maṅgalaḥ

The supremely auspicious Lord then married Kālindī on a day when the season, the lunar asterism and the configurations of the sun and other heavenly bodies were all propitious. In this way he brought the greatest pleasure to his devotees.

COMMENTARY: After coming to Dvārakā (*atha*) he married Kālindī. Or *atha* simply indicates auspiciousness. Thus auspiciousness is indicated. The constellations of the season were strong (*ūrjite*). Naturally, they were auspicious, but to teach the people, Uttarāyaṇa, Māgha month, etc. should be chosen. After the four months of monsoon during Mārgaśīrṣa month, after Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā, which was endowed with all wealth, the marriage was performed, because Kṛṣṇa himself was most auspicious (*parama-maṅgalaḥ*). By his influence, everything became auspicious. He gave bliss to Vasudeva and other relatives. He always gave bliss, but now, with the marriage to Kālindī, he especially gave (*vitanvan*) the highest bliss.

Text 58.30

vindyānuvindyāv āvantyau duryodhana-vaśānugau
svayaṁ-vare sva-bhaginīṁ kṛṣṇe saktāṁ nyaṣedhatām

Vindya and Anuvindya, who shared the throne of Avantī, were followers of Duryodhana. When the time came for their sister [Mitravindā] to select her husband in the *svayaṁvara* ceremony, they forbade her to choose Kṛṣṇa, although she was attracted to him.

COMMENTARY: Though it was a matter of choice (*svyaṁvare*), the brothers prevented their sister who was attracted to Kṛṣṇa from marrying him. Or she was attracted to Kṛṣṇa, who stole her (*svayaṁvare*). Or the brothers forbade her to choose by herself (*svayaṁ vare*). They were followers of Duryodhana. They followed his desire. Kṛṣṇa stole her, though she was the daughter of his aunt, because his heart was attracted by the prema of his dear devotee (*kṛṣṇe*).

Text 58.31

rājādhidevyās tanayāṁ mitravindāṁ pitṛ-ṣvasuḥ
prasahya hṛtavān kṛṣṇo rājan rājñāṁ prapaśyatām

My dear king, Kṛṣṇa forcibly took away Princess Mitravindā, the daughter of his aunt Rājādhidevī, before the eyes of the rival kings.

COMMENTARY: O king! Śukadeva calls out in joy at the mercy given to the Lord's devotee. Or Kṛṣṇa was shining (*rājan*). He stole her while the kings watched intently, or though they saw it, he disregarded them.

Since she came from Śibi province, she was called Śaibyā. Later Draupadī addresses her in this way during the journey to Kurukṣetra. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that in his commentary on that episode.

Text 58.32

nagnajin nāma kauśalya āsīd rājāti-dhārmikaḥ
tasya satyābhavat kanyā devī nāgnajitī nṛpa

O king, Nagnajit, the very pious king of Kauśalya, had a lovely daughter named Satyā, or Nāgnajitī.

COMMENTARY: Nagnajit was dedicated to *bhagavat-dharma* (*atidhārmikaḥ*). Nagnajit means he who conquers even the naked Jains. O king! You know the beauty and good conduct of princesses! Why do I have to describe it?

Text 58.33

na tāṁ śekur nṛpā voḍhum ajitvā sapta-go-vṛṣān
tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān su-durdharṣān vīrya-gandhāsahān khalān

The kings who came as suitors were not allowed to marry her unless they could subdue seven sharp-horned bulls. These bulls were extremely

vicious and uncontrollable, and they could not tolerate even the smell of warriors.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Thought the father wanted to give his daughter to the Lord, because of fear of rivals like Jarāsandha, he devised a method for her marriage. *Go-vṛṣāṇ* simply means bulls using two words, or the best (*vṛṣān*) bulls (*go*), or the most uncontrollable bulls (*vṛṣān*) among all the cattle (*go*). Without tying up (*ajitvā*) the bulls, they could not marry her. The bulls were violent (*khalān*), having the nature of demons. In the Second Canto these bulls are counted among the demons. (SB 2.7.34) It is stated there that after being killed, by the power of the Lord's touch, they attained liberation.

Text 58.34

tāṁ śrutvā vṛṣa-jil-labhyāṁ bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ
jagāma kauśalya-puraṁ sainyena mahatā vṛtaḥ

When the Lord, the protector of the devotees, heard of the princess who was to be won by the conqueror of the bulls, he went to the capital of Kauśalya with a large army.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The Lord, endowed with all powers (*bhagavān*), the protector of the devotees (*sātvatāṁ patiḥ*), understanding all the kings would be going there, went there, surrounded by a huge army.

Text 58.35

sa kośala-patiḥ prītaḥ pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ
arhaṇenāpi guruṇā pūjayan pratinanditaḥ

The king of Kośala, pleased to see Kṛṣṇa, worshiped him by rising from his throne and offering him a seat of honor and substantial gifts. Kṛṣṇa also greeted the king respectfully.

COMMENTARY: The king was famous for following dharma (*saḥ*) or wanted to give his daughter to Kṛṣṇa. *Ādibhiḥ* indicates giving *arghya, pādya* and

other items. He worshipped him with the best (*gurunā*) items, such as ornaments. This could also include arghya, etc. but to stress the importance, they are mentioned separately or they are mentioned separately because of the particular method he used in offering separately.

Text 58.36

varaṁ vilokyābhimataṁ samāgataṁ
narendra-kanyā cakame ramā-patim
bhūyād ayaṁ me patir āśiṣo 'nalaḥ
karotu satyā yadi me dhṛto vrataḥ

When the king's daughter saw her chosen suitor arrive, she immediately desired to have him, the husband of Rukmiṇī. She prayed, "May he become my husband. If I have kept my vows, may the sacred fire bring about the fulfillment of my hopes."

COMMENTARY: She long cherished (*abhimatam*) Kṛṣṇa, since he was the lord of Lakṣmī or since he was approved by all (*abhimatam*) by form and qualities, or he was approved as the husband of Rukmiṇī (*ramā-patim*). Seeing him directly coming with his friends (*samāgatam*), she desired him because she was ornamented with good form and all qualities. What did she desire? May the fire, long worshipped by me, make my desires (*āśiṣaḥ*) true, if my vow was performed according to rules, or if the rules of worship were followed with care. Plural of desires (*āśiṣaḥ*) is used to show respect.

Text 58.37

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-rajaḥ śirasā bibharti
śrīr abja-jaḥ sa-giriśaḥ saha loka-pālaiḥ
līlā-tanuḥ sva-kṛta-setu-parīpsayā yaḥ
kāle 'dadhat sa bhagavān mama kena tuṣyet

"Lakṣmī, Brahmā, Śiva and the rulers of the various planets place the dust of his lotus feet on their heads, and to protect the laws, which he has created, he assumes pastime incarnations at various times. By what *sādhana* will Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān, become pleased with me?"

COMMENTARY: "I am satisfied by *bhakti*." Brahmā, who arose from the lotus in the Lord's navel and who is thus the Lord's son, holds only one particle

of his foot dust on his head. Śiva is considered secondary (*sa-giriśaḥ*) because Śiva appeared from Brahmā, and holds the dust by Brahmā's order. Indra and others are also secondary. Śrī, first in the list, is the best. Śrī, being closest to the Lord, is mentioned first. Brahmā has the Lord's affection, being his son. Then Śiva has the Lord's affection. And then the *devatās* such as Indra have his affection. By his mercy, Indra and others carry the foot dust.

Or Śiva (*giriśaḥ*), having great powers (*sa*), is famous as the friend of the Lord. But even he, to attain the rarely attained Lord, holds the dust along with the *devatās* like Indra. They all worship the Lord. This is made clear in *Hari-vaṁśa*, in describing the theft of the *pārijāta* tree. Śrī and the others show devotion to the Lord. So who am I?

Even in his avatāra forms, it is rare for them to hold his foot dust. In order to protect the laws he has made, he accepts forms having various pastimes (*līlā-tanuḥ*) at appropriate times. When you become absorbed in your pastimes, they cannot attract your attention. Or among the avatāras manifested by your mercy, someone may satisfy one of them by some *bhakti*. But it is not possible to satisfy you, the source of the avatāras. But I, trespassing my dharma, am not qualified with *bhakti*. How, by what method, will the Lord who manifests unlimited powers (*bhagavān*), be satisfied with me? The potential form of the verb expresses a possibility (*tuṣyet*). He cannot be satisfied.

Text 58.38

arcitaṁ punar ity āha nārāyaṇa jagat-pate
ātmānandena pūrṇasya karavāṇi kim alpakaḥ

King Nagnajit first worshiped the Lord properly and then addressed him: "O Nārāyaṇa, Lord of the universe, you are full in your own spiritual pleasure. Therefore, what can this insignificant person do for you?"

COMMENTARY: The king again worshipped the Lord, because of great affection or in order to speak to him. O shelter of all *jīvas*! O protector of the universe! We cannot protect the citizens by levying taxes, etc. You depend on nothing else. Your experience bliss in yourself. You have happiness by your nature. Or O Nārāyaṇa! O Supreme Lord! O protector of

the universe, master of all things! You are full of your own happiness. First, the king described the Lord who is visible and then invisible, out of great respect. What can I do for you, being very small? I can do nothing.

Text 58.39

śrī-śuka uvāca
tam āha bhagavān hṛṣṭaḥ kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ
megha-gambhīrayā vācā sa-smitaṁ kuru-nandana

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O beloved descendant of Kuru, the Supreme Lord was pleased, and after accepting a comfortable seat, he smiled and addressed the king in a voice as deep as the rumbling of a cloud.

COMMENTARY: The Lord was endowed with unlimited qualities like affection for his devotee (*bhagavān*).

He accepted a seat which was offered for a long time. He stood for some time because he was being praised, and then sat. He smiled out of his nature or to give mercy to the king. Or knowing the king's arrangements and desires, he felt inner joy at the request of the daughter. Out of excitement, Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit, "O son of the Kurus!"

Text 58.40

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
narendra yācñā kavibhir vigarhitā
rājanya-bandhor nija-dharma-vartinaḥ
tathāpi yāce tava sauhṛdecchayā
kanyāṁ tvadīyāṁ na hi śulka-dā vayam

The Supreme Lord said: O ruler of men, learned authorities condemn begging for a person in the royal order who is executing his dharma. Even so, desiring your friendship, I ask you for your daughter, though we offer no gifts in exchange.

COMMENTARY: I will be satisfied with your giving your daughter. Begging by *kṣatriyas* is condemned by poets like Vyāsa and especially condemned (*vi-garhitaḥ*) for those following their own dharma. Stealing the girl in the *svayaṁbara* is praised for *kṣatriyas.* O king you know this (*narendra*)! For having a good relationship with you (*tava sauhṛdecchayā*), or desiring that

you have prema for me, I do not give a gift for certain (*hi*) for respecting the family. He uses the plural (*vayam*) to indicate the Yadu dynasty, out of respect for being born among them, or to indicate the huge family of Yadus. Otherwise, others would think him insignificant.

Text 58.41

śrī-rājovāca
ko 'nyas te 'bhyadhiko nātha kanyā-vara ihepsitaḥ
guṇaika-dhāmno yasyāṅge śrīr vasaty anapāyinī

The king said: My Lord, who could be a better husband for my daughter than you, the exclusive abode of all qualities? On your body the goddess of fortune herself resides, never leaving you for any reason.

COMMENTARY: O Lord, whom all people request to attain. One should desire to attain you. Who else is there with qualities greater than yours? There is no one. His form is described as the reason for attaining him. Lakṣmī, always very steady, resides on the chest of your form (*aṅge*), since you are the extraordinary abode of all qualities like truth and cleanliness.

Text 58.42

kintv asmābhiḥ kṛtaḥ pūrvaṁ samayaḥ sātvatarṣabha
puṁsāṁ vīrya-parīkṣārthaṁ kanyā-vara-parīpsayā

But to ascertain the proper husband for my daughter, O protector of the devotees, we previously set a condition to test the prowess of her suitors.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I and my relatives have made a rule previously. With a desire to obtain for my daughter a qualified groom (*kanyā-vara-parīpsayā*), or because of the desire of the groom for my daughter, we have made a rule in order to test the courage and strength of the man. You should also follow our rule, O maintainer of the devotees.

Text 58.43

saptaite go-vṛṣā vīra durdāntā duravagrahāḥ
etair bhagnāḥ su-bahavo bhinna-gātrā nṛpātmajāḥ

These seven bulls are impossible to tame and stubborn, O hero. They have defeated many princes, breaking their limbs.

COMMENTARY: These (*ete*) are the seven bulls. He indicates their presence by pointing with his finger. Because of them or by them, many princes have been defeated, because their limbs were broken. They were sons of kings —young and strong. O hero (*vīra*)! By your prowess, you should tie them up, all by yourself.

Text 58.44

yadīme nigṛhītāḥ syus tvayaiva yadu-nandana
varo bhavān abhimato duhitur me śriyaḥ-pate

Since you can subdue them, O descendant of Yadu, you will certainly be the appropriate bridegroom for my daughter, O Lord of Śrī.

COMMENTARY: O joy of the Yadus! You should to this to give joy to the Yadus. O husband of Lakṣmī! I must agree to this because you are the master of Lakṣmī. By subduing the bulls, you have permission to take my daughter. Or you are the appropriate groom since you are the husband of Rukmiṇī.

Text 58.45

evaṁ samayam ākarṇya baddhvā parikaraṁ prabhuḥ
ātmānaṁ saptadhā kṛtvā nyagṛhṇāl līlayaiva tān

Upon hearing these terms, the Lord tightened his clothing, expanded himself into seven forms and easily subdued the bulls.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

After hearing this rule, the Lord bound his clothing. It should be understood that he smiled. He bound his clothing tightly, showing he was fully capable (*prabhuḥ*) or being capable because of previous practice as a cowherd. Expanding his form into seven, he easily subdued the bulls. The

word *eva* can also indicate that it only appeared that he had seven forms, since he moved so quickly.

Text 58.46

baddhvā tān dāmabhiḥ śaurir bhagna-darpān hataujasaḥ
vyakarṣal līlayā baddhān bālo dāru-mayān yathā

Śauri tied up the bulls, whose pride and strength were now broken, and pulled them with ropes just as a child playfully pulls wooden toy bulls.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They were like wooden toys pulled by strings by a child.

Text 58.47

tataḥ prītaḥ sutāṁ rājā dadau kṛṣṇāya vismitaḥ
tāṁ pratyagṛhṇād bhagavān vidhi-vat sadṛśīṁ prabhuḥ

Then King Nagnajit, pleased and astonished, presented his daughter to Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Lord accepted this suitable bride in the proper Vedic fashion.

COMMENTARY: The king was astonished by this direct experience of Kṛṣṇa's amazing abilities. Or because he was pleased, he smiled (*vi-smitaḥ*) in a special way. Kṛṣṇa accepted the bride or married the princess who was equal to himself in form and qualities (*sadṛśīm*) according to the rules, because he was capable of fulfilling the desire of his devotee (*prabhuḥ*), because he manifested all powers (*bhagavān*).

Text 58.48

rāja-patnyaś ca duhituḥ kṛṣṇaṁ labdhvā priyaṁ patim
lebhire paramānandaṁ jātaś ca paramotsavaḥ

The king's wives felt the greatest ecstasy upon attaining Kṛṣṇa as the dear husband of the royal princess, and a mood of great festivity arose.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The king's wives felt the highest bliss when their daughter obtained her desired (*priyam*) husband. Therefore, a huge festival took place.

Text 58.49

śaṅkha-bhery-ānakā nedur gīta-vādya-dvijāśiṣaḥ
narā nāryaḥ pramuditāḥ suvāsaḥ-srag-alaṅkṛtāḥ

Conch shells, horns and drums resounded, along with vocal and instrumental music and the sounds of *brāhmaṇas,* invoking blessings. The joyful men and women adorned themselves with fine clothing and garlands.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The various sounds of conches, etc. helped produce the festivity mentioned in the previous verse. The instruments accompanied the singing with rhythm. Dancing was also present. This produced joy in the men and women who were wearing fine clothing, garlands and ornaments such as earrings.

Texts 58.50–51

daśa-dhenu-sahasrāṇi pāribarham adād vibhuḥ
yuvatīnāṁ tri-sāhasraṁ niṣka-grīva-suvāsasam
nava-nāga-sahasrāṇi nāgāc chata-guṇān rathān
rathāc chata-guṇān aśvān aśvāc chata-guṇān narān

As the dowry, powerful King Nagnajit gave ten thousand cows, three thousand young maidservants wearing golden ornaments on their necks and bedecked in fine clothing, nine thousand elephants, a hundred times as many chariots as elephants, a hundred times as many horses as chariots, and a hundred times as many male servants as horses.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The cows given had newly given birth to calves. He gave them with the calves. The king was fully capable of giving (*prabhuḥ*) all these items. Cows are mentioned first because they were the best donation or since cows were very pleasing to Kṛṣṇa. The servant girls are mentioned before the

elephants and chariots because of their superiority of service, etc. Successively, more elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers were given. The number of maid servants was only a third of the number of elephants. *Niṣkas* only are mentioned since this was their main ornament, but it is understood the maid servants also wore other ornaments. The singular *nāgāt, rathāt*, and *aśvāt* are used to indicate a class. *Narān* refers to servants and foot soldiers.

Text 58.52

dampatī ratham āropya mahatyā senayāvṛtau
sneha-praklinna-hṛdayo yāpayām āsa kośalaḥ

The king of Kośala, his heart melting with affection, had the bride and groom seated on their chariot, and then he sent them on their way surrounded by a great army.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The king had the couple surrounded by a great army because his heart was extremely moist (*praklinna*) with tears, caused by his affection.

Text 58.53

śrutvaitad rurudhur bhūpā nayantaṁ pathi kanyakām
bhagna-vīryāḥ su-durmarṣā yadubhir go-vṛṣaiḥ purā

When the intolerant kings who had been rival suitors heard what had happened, they tried to stop Kṛṣṇa on the road as he took his bride home. But just as the bulls had broken the kings' strength before, the Yadu warriors broke it now.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The kings heard about this in their various lands and then came. Kṛṣṇa was somewhat delayed in Kośala because of waiting for the correct constellation, etc. for the wedding, conducted according to the rules. They obstructed him on the road because they were extremely intolerant in nature (*sudurmarṣāḥ*), proud of their heroism. But their valor was

immediately crushed by the Yadus. This was the same as their previous condition of being defeated by the bulls.

Text 58.54

tān asyataḥ śara-vrātān bandhu-priya-kṛd arjunaḥ
gāṇḍīvī kālayām āsa siṁhaḥ kṣudra-mṛgān iva

Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, was always eager to please his friend Kṛṣṇa, and thus he drove back those opponents, who were shooting torrents of arrows at the Lord. He did this just as a lion drives away insignificant animals.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna drove them away easily because he had the Gāṇḍīva bow. Why did he do this? He did it to please his friend. Arjuna came there because he heard of the attempts of evil kings to obstruct Kṛṣṇa on the road.

Text 58.55

pāribarham upāgṛhya dvārakām etya satyayā
reme yadūnām ṛṣabho bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ

Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, then took his dowry and Satyā to Dvārakā and continued to live there happily.

COMMENTARY: Holding the wealth closely (*upa-ā-gṛhya*), he went with Satyā to Dvārakā. The kings could not prevent him from taking the wealth. Being the best of the Yadus, he was served by them. He was cared for by Devakī (*devakī-sūtaḥ*) since he appeared on earth for various pastimes (*bhagavān*) as the Supreme Lord. Or endowed will all powers (*bhagavān*), he enjoyed.

Text 58.56

śrutakīrteḥ sutāṁ bhadrāṁ upayeme pitṛ-ṣvasuḥ
kaikeyīṁ bhrātṛbhir dattāṁ kṛṣṇaḥ santardanādibhiḥ

Bhadrā was a princess of the Kaikeya kingdom and the daughter of Kṛṣṇa's paternal aunt Śrutakīrti. The Lord married Bhadrā when her brothers, headed by Santardana, offered her to him.

COMMENTARY: The brothers gave Bhadrā because Kṛṣṇa was he who attracts all hearts (*kṛṣṇaḥ*).

Text 58.57

sutāṁ ca madrādhipater lakṣmaṇāṁ lakṣaṇair yatām
svayaṁ-vare jahāraikaḥ sa suparṇaḥ sudhām iva

Then the Lord married Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of the king of Madra. Kṛṣṇa appeared at her *svayaṁvara* ceremony and took her away by himself, just as Garuḍa once stole the *devatās'* nectar.

COMMENTARY: The king of Madra was named Bṛhatsena. Lakṣmaṇā was endowed with auspicious marks (*lakṣaṇaiḥ*). The king, according to royal custom arranged for a *svayaṁvara,* and later, knowing the desires of his daughter, arranged for the impossible piercing of the fish so that Kṛṣṇa could attain her. It was pierced by Kṛṣṇa. She accepted him. He conquered the kings on the road, who had come to oppose him with battle. By himself, he took her away to Dvārakā. This is described later during the meeting at Kurukṣetra. The example of Garuḍa stealing nectar shows how, alone, he took her by defeating a host of kings.

Text 58.58

anyāś caivaṁ-vidhā bhāryāḥ kṛṣṇasyāsan sahasraśaḥ
bhaumaṁ hatvā tan-nirodhād āhṛtāś cāru-darśanāḥ

Kṛṣṇa also acquired thousands of other wives equal to these when he killed Bhaumāsura and freed the beautiful maidens the demon was holding captive.

COMMENTARY: He acquired thousands of wives who were endowed with qualities like Lakṣmaṇā's (*evaṁ vidhāḥ*). They were beautiful (*cāru-darśanāḥ*). Or like the princesses starting with Rukmiṇī and ending with Lakṣmaṇā, he also attained many daughters of *devatās*. This will be described in later chapters. Bhauma was born from Varāhā in the womb of Bhūmi (earth).

In *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* earth says:

yadāham uddhṛtā nātha tvayā sūkara-mūrtinā
tvat sparśa-saṁbhavaḥ putras tadāyaṁ mayy ajāyata

O Lord! When you lifted me up in the form of a boar, by your touch, this son was born to me.

He had great strength. This is described later.

---

[1] There is a story that Yamī (Yamunā) proposed incest with her brother Yama to produce progeny for the world.

Chapter Fifty-nine
The Killing of the Demon Naraka

Text 59.1

śrī-rājovāca
yathā hato bhagavatā bhaumo yena ca tāḥ striyaḥ
niruddhā etad ācakṣva vikramaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ

[King Parīkṣit said:] How was Bhaumāsura, who kidnapped so many women, killed by the Supreme Lord? Please narrate this adventure of Lord who holds the Śārṅga bow.

COMMENTARY: How was Bhauma who kept the women in his house (*niruddhā*) killed directly by the Lord who appeared to destroy demons (*bhagavatā*)? Narrate the astonishing story or the valor of the Lord. That was suitable since he held the Śārṅga bow. *Etad* instead of *etam* is poetic license. Or *etat* indicates a general condition.

Texts 59.2–3

śrī-śuka uvāca
indreṇa hṛta-chatreṇa hṛta-kuṇḍala-bandhunā
hṛtāmarādri-sthānena jñāpito bhauma-ceṣṭitam
sa-bhāryo garuḍārūḍhaḥ prāg-jyotiṣa-puraṁ yayau
giri-durgaiḥ śastra-durgair jalāgny-anila-durgamam
mura-pāśāyutair ghorair dṛḍhaiḥ sarvata āvṛtam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Bhauma had stolen the earrings belonging to Indra's mother, along with Varuṇa's umbrella and the *devatās'* playground at the peak of Mandara mountain, Indra went to Kṛṣṇa and informed him of these misdeeds. The Lord, taking his wife Satyabhāmā with him, then rode on Garuḍa to Prāgjyotiṣa-pura, which was surrounded on all sides by fortifications consisting of hills, unmanned weapons, water, fire and wind, and by obstructions of *mura-pāśa* wire.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

It should be understood that Indra went to Dvārakā and informed Kṛṣṇa. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

dvāravatyāṁ sthite kṛṣṇe śakras tri-bhuvaneśvaraḥ
ājagāmātha maitreya mattairāvata-pṛṣṭhagaḥ

Indra, lord of the three worlds, mounted on intoxicated Airāvata, came to Dvārakā where Kṛṣṇa was staying.

Bhauma had also stolen the mountain playground of the *devatās,* Mandara mountain, with its jeweled peak.

Stealing Varuṇa's umbrella and other acts of Bhauma are also described in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.

bhaumo 'yaṁ narako nāma prāgjyotiṣa-pureśvaraḥ
karoti sarva-bhūtānām upaghātam arindama
deva-sidda-surādīnāṁ nṛpāṇāṁ ca janārdana
hṛtvā tu so 'suraḥ kanyā rurudhe nijamandire
chatraṁ yat salila-srāvi ujjahāra pracetasaḥ
mandarasya tathā śṛṅgaṁ hṛtavān maṇi-parvatam
amṛta-srāviṇī divye man mātuḥ kṛṣṇa kuṇḍale
jahāra so 'suro 'dityā vāñchaty airāvataṁ gajam

Bhauma, also called Naraka, the controller of Prāgjyotiṣa, is disturbing all living beings, the *devatās,* Siddhas, sages, and kings, O lord. He has kidnapped young women and locked them in his palace. He has stolen Varuṇa's umbrella which flows with water. He has stolen the jeweled peak of Mandara. The demon stole my mother Aditi's shining earrings which flow with nectar. He desires my elephant Airāvata.

He made his request while offering respects on the ground. That is understood from verse 41. Garuḍa arrived just by calling him in his mind or he was in the vicinity ready to serve. Kṛṣṇa mounted Garuḍa with his wife since she wanted to see the excitement of retrieving the goods, and he wanted to present her with the *pārijāta* tree. Having her accompany him also indicates a disregard for Bhauma's ferocity. "She will go with me to the battle and then desire the *pārijāta* tree, which I will bring back. I will derive pleasure when Rukmiṇī desires the tree. It is not that I desire to fight with Bhauma." This is how he felt in all the battles with demons. Indra returned to his city.

āruhyairāvataṁ nāgaṁ śakro 'pi tridivaṁ yayau
tato jagāma kṛṣṇaś ca paśyatāṁ dvārakaukasām

Mounting Airāvata, Indra returned to Svarga. Kṛṣṇa went to Bhauma's city while the people of Dvārakā watched.

The defense using wind was a strong wind, whirling around like a potter's wheel. The various obstacles are here described as the Lord came to them. The order in which he pierced them is described later. The fortress of weapons consists of weapons used as obstacles (not held by warriors) which on begin touched produced injuries on the body. They were terrible (*ghoraiḥ*) because they were sharp. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes the city:

prāgjyotiṣa-purasyāpi samantācchata-yojanam
ācitā mauravaiḥ pāśaiḥ kṣurāntair dvija-sattama

The city was a hundred yojanas in length and breadth, piled up with sharp ropes of the Mura demon.

The word *mauravaiḥ* comes from Mura just as *saukara* comes from *sūkara.* The ropes were difficult to cut (*dṛḍhaiḥ*).

Text 59.4

gadayā nirbibhedādrīn śastra-durgāṇi sāyakaiḥ
cakreṇāgniṁ jalaṁ vāyuṁ mura-pāśāṁs tathāsinā

With his club the Lord broke through the rock fortifications; with his arrows, the weapon fortifications; with his disc, the fire, water and wind fortifications; and with his sword, the *mura-pāśa* cables.

COMMENTARY: By throwing his club, Kṛṣṇa pierced the mountains. It is understood he also used other weapons such as the *cakra* for piercing the mountains. He did this from afar, and destroyed all the fortifications completely (*nir-bibheda*). Previously the order was water, fire and wind fortresses. Here the fire is mentioned first. With the cakra possessing fire, he destroyed the fire wall easily by penetrating it with fire. *Tathā* indicates all or "in the same way."

Text 59.5

śaṅkha-nādena yantrāṇi hṛdayāni manasvinām
prākāraṁ gadayā gurvyā nirbibheda gadādharaḥ

With the sound of his conch shell Gadādhara then shattered the traps on the fortress, along with the hearts of its brave defenders, and with his heavy club he demolished the surrounding ramparts.

COMMENTARY: The machines were placed on the fortress and threw balls of iron with special herbs. The sound of the conch shattered the machines and the hearts of the defenders. The heavy club destroyed the heavy walls. He did not take effort to destroy these walls because he did it simply by holding the club in his hand.

Text 59.6

pāñcajanya-dhvaniṁ śrutvā yugāntaśani-bhīṣaṇam
muraḥ śayāna uttasthau daityaḥ pañca-śirā jalāt

The five-headed demon Mura, who was sleeping in the city's moat, awoke and rose up out of the water when he heard the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's Pāñcajanya conch shell, a sound as terrifying as the thunder at the end of the cosmic age.

COMMENTARY: Mura slept in the water because he was a demon. By nature, they indulge in drinking intoxicants. Or he was without worry, being unconquerable by weapons.

Text 59.7

tri-śūlam udyamya su-durnirīkṣaṇo
yugānta-sūryānala-rocir ulbaṇaḥ
grasaṁs tri-lokīm iva pañcabhir mukhair
abhyadravat tārkṣya-sutaṁ yathoragaḥ

Shining with the blinding, terrible effulgence of the sun's fire at the end of a millennium, Mura seemed to swallow up the three worlds with his five mouths. He lifted up his trident and attacked the Lord just as a snake attacks Garuḍa.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

A longer meter is used in this verse as if one would sing it with excitement in describing the battle. Mura was difficult to behold because he shone like the sun at the end of the yuga. By nature, he was terrifying (*ulbaṇaḥ*) since he seemed to swallow the three worlds with his five mouths.

With his mouths gaping, he rushed at the Lord just as snake attacks Garuḍa. Or he rushed at Garuḍa since he appeared to be a bigger target.

Text 59.8

āvidhya śūlaṁ tarasā garutmate
nirasya vaktrair vyanadat sa pañcabhiḥ
sa rodasī sarva-diśo ’mbaraṁ mahān
āpūrayann aṇḍa-kaṭāham āvṛṇot

Mura whirled his trident and then hurled it fiercely at Garuḍa, roaring with all five mouths. The sound filled the earth and sky, all directions and the limits of outer space, until it reverberated against the very shell of the universe.

COMMENTARY: He hurled his trident with all his strength. The roaring filled the whole universe, including the heavens and earth (*rodasī*). Instead of *ambaram* sometimes *antaram* is seen. This means Pātāla.

Since sound arises in ether, the sound went to the five upper planets including Svarga, since space was large and extended far upwards. Not able to leave the universe, the sound returned down to earth and then expanded in all directions. Then after filling everything above, it entered a hole into the lower planets. Thus the sound gradually filled (*pūrayan*) the universe completely (*ā*).

Text 59.9

tadāpatad vai tri-śikhaṁ garutmate
hariḥ śarābhyām abhinat tridhojasā
mukheṣu taṁ cāpi śarair atāḍayat
tasmai gadāṁ so ’pi ruṣā vyamuñcata

Then with two arrows, the Lord struck the trident flying toward Garuḍa and broke it into three pieces. Next, the Lord hit Mura’s mouths with several arrows, and the demon angrily hurled his club at the Lord.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The trident approached Garuḍa but did not reach him. Quickly (*ojasā*) Kṛṣṇa shot two arrows. The word *api* indicates the Lord's great ability. Out of anger Mura opened his mouths and Kṛṣṇa shot arrows into them, striking them all at the same time.

Text 59.10

tām āpatantīṁ gadayā gadāṁ mṛdhe
gadāgrajo nirbibhide sahasradhā
udyamya bāhūn abhidhāvato 'jitaḥ
śirāṁsi cakreṇa jahāra līlayā

As Mura's club sped toward him on the battlefield, Gadāgraja intercepted it with his own and broke it into thousands of pieces. Mura then raised his arms high and rushed at the unconquerable Lord, who easily sliced off his heads with his disc weapon.

COMMENTARY: Present on the battlefield (*mṛdhe*), the Lord took pleasure in fighting, because he was born before Gada to Vasudeva, to take pleasure in fighting (*gadāgrajaḥ*). Or he was personally present in the battle (*mṛdhe*), not hiding by illusory powers, because as the Lord he appeared as the elder brother of Gada. The demon ran facing him or near him (*abhidhāvataḥ*). The Lord was full of great valor (*ajitaḥ*) and thus easily cut off the demon's heads, throwing them far away. Instead of *śirāṁsi cakreṇa* sometimes *śīrāṁsi pañcāpi* (five heads) is seen. This indicates his heads were severed with the club. However, the version with *cakreṇa* seems correct since the next verse describes the act by comparing it to Indra's using his thunderbolt to sever the peak of a mountain.

Text 59.11

vyasuḥ papātāmbhasi kṛtta-śīrṣo
nikṛtta-śṛṅgo 'drir ivendra-tejasā
tasyātmajāḥ sapta pitur vadhāturāḥ
pratikriyāmarṣa-juṣaḥ samudyatāḥ

Lifeless, Mura's decapitated body fell into the water like a mountain whose peak has been severed by the power of Indra's thunderbolt. The demon's seven sons, lamenting their father's death, prepared to retaliate.

COMMENTARY: The head was like the peak of a mount cut decisively (*nikṛtta*). Overcome with grief by the killing, the seven sons became angry in order to take revenge and became eager to fight.

Text 59.12

tāmro 'ntarikṣaḥ śravaṇo vibhāvasur
vasur nabhasvān aruṇaś ca saptamaḥ
pīṭhaṁ puraskṛtya camū-patiṁ mṛdhe
bhauma-prayuktā niragan dhṛtāyudhāḥ

Ordered by Bhaumāsura, Mura's seven sons—Tāmra, Antarikṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu, Nabhasvān and Aruṇa—followed their general, Pīṭha, onto the battlefield bearing their weapons.

COMMENTARY: This verse reinforces the last verse. *Saptamaḥ* indicates that there were no other brothers, only seven. Pītha was in front because he was the general. They were engaged by Bhauma, going with Pīṭha. They held weapons. Otherwise, overcome with grief, losing all power of discrimination, they would have left the battle, ignoring everyone. Or naturally angry to take revenge, engaged by Bhauma, holding their weapons, with Pīṭha in front, they left the city to fight, or to the field (*mṛdhe*).

Text 59.13

prāyuñjatāsādya śarān asīn gadāḥ
śakty-ṛṣṭi-śūlāny ajite ruṣolbaṇāḥ
tac-chastra-kūṭaṁ bhagavān sva-mārgaṇair
amogha-vīryas tilaśaś cakarta ha

These fierce warriors furiously attacked invincible Kṛṣṇa with arrows, knives, clubs, spears, swords and tridents, but the Supreme Lord, with unfailing prowess, cut this mountain of weapons into tiny pieces with his arrows.

COMMENTARY: They attacked the Lord (*ajite*) using various weapons, though he could not be conquered, because they became cruel (*ulbaṇāḥ*) from anger. The weapons were progressively more effective in weight and ability to kill. *Rṣṭi* is a type of sword. The Lord cut all (*kuṭam*) of the weapons into small pieces with his extraordinary (*sva*) arrows, because his valor was unfailing (*amogha-vīryaḥ*), since he had all powers (*bhagavān*). *Ha* indicates joy.

Text 59.14

tān pīṭha-mukhyān anayad yama-kṣayaṁ
nikṛtta-śīrṣoru-bhujāṅghri-varmaṇaḥ
svānīka-pān acyuta-cakra-sāyakais
tathā nirastān narako dharā-sutaḥ
nirīkṣya durmarṣaṇa āsravan-madair
gajaiḥ payodhi-prabhavair nirākramāt

The Lord severed the heads, thighs, arms, legs and armor of these opponents led by Pīṭha by means of his arrows and *cakra*, and sent them all to the abode of Yamarāja. Narakāsura, the son of the earth, could not contain his fury when he saw the fate of his military leaders. Thus he went out of the citadel with elephants born from the Milk Ocean who were exuding *mada* from their foreheads out of excitement.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

They all went to the abode of Yama. They died. However, after that they attained liberation. *Acyuta* here means that his weapons were unfailing in their purpose. The leaders were killed (*nirastān*) by having their heads cut off, etc. with ease, from far away, by the Lord's weapons. Bhauma saw this because he went up on top of the fort. He was called Naraka because from birth he had a wicked nature, taking human heads in his mouth as soon as he was born. The story is told in the *Kālika Purāṇa.* He was the son of the earth and thus had great power. He emerged (*nirakramat*) from the fort with elephants born from the Milk Ocean. This means that the elephants came in the family of Airāvata, who came from the Milk Ocean. Previously they were of that family, but were now on the enemy's side.

Text 59.15

dṛṣṭvā sa-bhāryaṁ garuḍopari sthitaṁ
sūryopariṣṭāt sa-taḍid ghanaṁ yathā
kṛṣṇaṁ sa tasmai vyasṛjac chata-ghnīṁ
yodhāś ca sarve yugapac ca vivyadhuḥ

Kṛṣṇa and his wife, mounted upon Garuḍa, looked like a cloud with lightning sitting above the sun. Seeing the Lord, Bhauma released his Śataghnī weapon at him, whereupon all of Bhauma's soldiers simultaneously attacked with their weapons.

COMMENTARY: On seeing the Lord with his wife, Naraka became furious. The second ca means api (even). His troops attacked at the same time. Or even though he saw this beauty, he was hard-hearted.
The troops were mounted on elephants or were just troops accompanying Naraka. Those with elephants were most prominent. They threw their weapons at the same time.

Text 59.16

tad bhauma-sainyaṁ bhagavān gadāgrajo
vicitra-vājair niśitaiḥ śilīmukhaiḥ
nikṛtta-bāhūru-śirodhra-vigrahaṁ
cakāra tarhy eva hatāśva-kuñjaram

At that moment Gadāgraja shot his sharp arrows at Bhaumāsura's army. These arrows, displaying variegated feathers, soon reduced that army to a mass of bodies with severed arms, thighs and necks. The Lord similarly killed the opposing horses and elephants.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"Arrows with variegated feathers" indicates that they went swiftly. Not only did the riders of the horses and elephants die but the horses and elephants also died.

Texts 59.17–19

yāni yodhaiḥ prayuktāni śastrāstrāṇi kurūdvaha
haris tāny acchinat tīkṣṇaiḥ śarair ekaikaśas trībhiḥ

uhyamānaḥ suparṇena pakṣābhyāṁ nighnatā gajān
gurutmatā hanyamānās tuṇḍa-pakṣa-nakher gajāḥ
puram evāviśann ārtā narako yudhy ayudhyata

Hari then struck down all the missiles and weapons the enemy soldiers threw at him, O hero of the Kurus, destroying each and every one with three sharp arrows. Meanwhile Garuḍa, as he carried the Lord, struck the enemy's elephants with his wings. Beaten by Garuḍa's wings, beak and talons, the elephants fled back into the city, leaving Narakāsura alone on the battlefield to oppose Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: *Śastra* means swords, etc. and *astrāṇi* means arrows, etc. The Lord was carried on Garuḍa, who flew here and there with great speed at ease. This appeared most glorious and indicates Garuḍa's power. Though he was carrying the Lord, with his wings he beat the elephants. From this, it is understood that the fighters were not riding the elephants. The elephants were situated separately. Some were killed and some injured. He attacked those in front with his beak, those on the sides with his wings, and those behind with his claws. This shows his speed and prowess. Naraka, remaining in the battle (*yudhi*), continued to fight. This indicates that he was fearless, since he stayed after the elephants and troops were all defeated.

Text 59.20

dṛṣṭvā vidrāvitaṁ sainyaṁ garuḍenārditaṁ svakaṁ
taṁ bhaumaḥ prāharac chaktyā vajraḥ pratihato yataḥ
nākampata tayā viddho mālāhata iva dvipaḥ

Seeing his army driven back and tormented by Garuḍa, Bhauma attacked him with his spear, which had once defeated Indra's thunderbolt. But though struck by that mighty weapon, Garuḍa was not shaken. Indeed, he was like an elephant hit with a flower garland.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He saw his troops scattered (*vidrāvitam*) since they were afflicted by Garuḍa. Or he saw the troops somewhat scattered and somewhat afflicted. The army suffered because the elephants were their mainstay (and had

fled). Or *sainya* can include elephant drivers and horsemen. Struck by the weapon, Garuḍa did not feel pain (he did not shake). A condition is indicated by the external symptoms. Or, Garuḍa did not move (did not shake) from his place and his determination.

Text 59.21

śūlaṁ bhaumo 'cyutaṁ hantum ādade vitathodyamaḥ
tad-visargāt pūrvam eva narakasya śiro hariḥ
apāharad gaja-sthasya cakreṇa kṣura-neminā

Bhauma, frustrated in all his attempts, took up his spear to kill Kṛṣṇa. But even before he could release it, the Lord cut off his head with his razor-sharp *cakra* as the demon sat atop his elephant.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He cut off his head even before Bhauma could release his spear. He took off the head as if Bhauma was unaware (*apa-aharat*), because he used the *cakra* with sharp blades on its spokes.

Text 59.22

sa-kuṇḍalaṁ cāru-kirīṭa-bhūṣaṇaṁ
babhau pṛthivyāṁ patitam samujjvalam
ha heti sādhv ity ṛṣayaḥ sureśvarā
mālyair mukundaṁ vikiranta īdire

Fallen on the ground, Bhaumāsura's head shone brilliantly, decorated with earrings and an attractive helmet. As cries of "Alas, alas!" and "Well done!" arose, the sages and principal *devatās* worshiped Mukunda by covering him with flower garlands.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The head was attractive to people because it was the head of a demon that had fallen on the ground. Though the Lord created beauty, now it was confirmed. Thus in joy the head is described as shining (*samujjvalam*). The earrings were somewhat a cause of the head's shining. Some who were very sinful at that place shouted in condemnation "*Hā, hā*!" This is

according to Kṣīrasvāmī. The sages said (verb should be added) in joy "Good!" The *devatās* like Indra, covering Kṛṣṇa with garlands, worshipped him.

Text 59.23

tataś ca bhūḥ kṛṣṇam upetya kuṇḍale
pratapta-jāmbūnada-ratna-bhāsvare
sa-vaijayantyā vana-mālayārpayat
prācetasaṁ chatram atho mahā-maṇim

The goddess of the earth then approached Kṛṣṇa and presented him with Aditi's earrings, which were made of glowing gold inlaid with shining jewels. She also gave him a Vaijayantī flower garland and vanamālā, Varuṇa's umbrella and the peak of Mandara Mountain.

COMMENTARY: Bhū lived always in the house of Naraka, being his mother. Or she appeared at that time. She approached Kṛṣṇa, directly Bhagavān, and her husband. The *vaijayantī* is a five colored garland and the *vanamālā* garland is made of leaves and flowers, extending to the feet. She offered him the earrings along with a *vanamālā* and *vaijyayantī* garland. *Atha* indicates all or after some time. After that she offered the umbrella and mountain.

Text 59.24

astauṣīd atha viśveśaṁ devī deva-varārcitam
prāñjaliḥ praṇatā rājan bhakti-pravaṇayā dhiyā

O king, after bowing down to him and then standing with joined palms, the goddess, her mind filled with devotion, began to praise the Lord of the universe, whom the best of *devatās* worship.

COMMENTARY: After offering the stolen items, she, overwhelmed with devotion in her mind (*dhiyā*), in order to praise him, first offered respects and then folded her hands. Or lowering her head and folding her hands, she began praising him, since he was Lord of the universe and thus worshipped by the best *devatās* like Brahmā. She praised him with such words. This was because she was dear to the Lord (*devī*) or shining (*devī*)

with *bhakti*. This indicates that she knew the glories of the Lord. O king, please understand the meaning of the prayers.

Text 59.25

bhūmir uvāca
namas te deva-deveśa śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara
bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya paramātman namo 'stu te

Goddess Bhūmi said: I offer respects to you. O Lord of the chief *devatās,* O holder of the conch, disc and club! O Supreme Soul within the heart! I offer respects to you who assume various forms to fulfill your devotees' desires.

COMMENTARY: You are the protector of *devatās* like Brahmā (*deva-deveśa*). Therefore, you hold the conch, disc and club to kill the wicked. You appear in various forms like Matsya by the desire of your devotees. You give them the proper intelligence (*paramātman*). The order of holding the weapons is from the lower left hand, and ending with the lower right. Since his consort is situated on his left, she would be on the left (followed by conch, disk and club). At this time, he was seen with four arms, as Nārada sees him. "*Deva-deveśa* means Nārāyaṇa." That is true. He is you. Thus the four-armed form is described holding the conch, etc. "Why, if I am Nārāyaṇa, am I also two armed?" You assume forms according to the desire of your devotee. Appearing as a human, you are beautiful. By your power you spread everywhere or you are the dearest to all people, O Paramātmā!

Text 59.26

namaḥ paṅkaja-nābhāya namaḥ paṅkaja-māline
namaḥ paṅkaja-netrāya namas te paṅkajāṅghraye

My respectful obeisances are unto you, O Lord, whose abdomen is marked with a depression like a lotus flower, who are always decorated with garlands of lotus flowers, whose glance is as cool as the lotus and whose feet are engraved with lotuses.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

This verse elaborates on the phrase *deva-deveśa* of the last verse and praises Kṛṣṇa. Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary makes lotus feet in the dual form, since Kṛṣṇa has two feet, even though only one of his feet is marked with the lotus. Using the word "lotus" can also be interpreted as an expression of the Lord's beauty. His navel is compared to a lotus because his navel is deep like a lake, from which the lotus of Brahmā sprouts, or because Kṛṣṇa has a navel shaped like a lotus. The first three elements—navel, garland and eyes—are described in order of increasing beauty and consequently excellence. The feet are placed last to indicate beauty as an expression of devotion.

Text 59.27

namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ vāsudevāya viṣṇave
puruṣāyādi-bījāya pūrṇa-bodhāya te namaḥ

Obeisances unto you, who, willingly revealing all your sweet qualities, act as the son of Vasudeva, spread your glories everywhere, produce *prema* for your devotees, and know their desires.

COMMENTARY: Such beauty is befitting. That is expressed in this verse. You are the form who eagerly reveals unlimited qualities (*bhagavān*) since you act as the son of Vasudeva. Thus you spread the universe with your glories. You are internal and external. You exist in the hearts of all as antaryāmī (*puruṣāya*). Moreover, you are the source of sweet pastimes (*ādi-bījāya*). Otherwise you would not show your infant pastimes and other pastimes.

Or you are the cause for your devotees' (*puruṣa*) gaining (*āya) prema*. There is no need for the devotees to inform you about their desire, since you are full of knowledge (*pūrṇa-bodhāya*).

Or you give an understanding of *bhakti* to the *ātmārāmas,* making the liberation of the *ātmārāmas* insignificant. Kunti says:

tathā paramahaṁsānāṁ munīnām amalātmanām
bhakti-yoga-vidhānārthaṁ kathaṁ paśyema hi striya

How can we women hope to see you, the object of *bhakti* for the omniscient, liberated sages? SB 1.10.8

Text 59.28

ajāya janayitre 'sya brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye
parāvarātman bhūtātman paramātman namo 'stu te

Obeisances unto you of unlimited energies, the unborn progenitor of this universe, the Brahman. O Soul of the high and the low, O Soul of the created elements, O all-pervading Supreme Soul, obeisances unto you.

COMMENTARY: You are without a cause, existing at all times (*ajāya*). You are the soul of causes like *mahat-tattva* and effects like the universe. Or you are the soul of elevated beings like Brahmā and low beings like trees. You are the soul of the *jīvas*. Not only one soul exists but the many *jīvas* who are different. And you are their *antaryāmī* (*paramātman*).

Or though you have a limited form as the son of Vasudeva, you are spread everywhere inside and outside, having unlimited, astonishing powers. That is described in the verse. You are not transformed with birth (*ajāya*) or the stages following birth. You are the cause of the universe. "But is it not contradictory to be without transformation and to create the universe?" Because you are the Supreme Lord it is possible. You are the form of Brahman. You possess unlimited powers.

Or the verse shows that the Lord is the source of all attainments of the devotees. I offer respects to the cause of Brahmā's understanding, or the cause of the universe for Lord Brahmā (*brahmaṇe janayitre*). Showing that the *puruṣa* is the source of Brahmā, that form is further described. I offer respects to that universe, which arises from Viṣṇu (*ajāya*). It is caused by the Lord's unlimited *śakti.* It is astonishing. By this creation, the Lord's great affection for Brahmā is shown.

Or "Does Brahmā create the universe?" Yes. But he creates by your astonishing *śakti (ananta-śaktaye*). "For my devotees, it is fine, but why promote *bhakti* to *ātmārāmas*?" It is because of the strength of your mercy. O soul of fathers (*para*) and mothers *(avara*)! O one who inspires caring for sons with affection! You have greater mercy than parents. O dearest to all (*paramātman*)! Everyone's mercy arises because they attain a drop of your ocean of mercy.

Text 59.29

tvaṁ vai sisṛkṣur aja utkaṭaṁ prabho
tamo nirodhāya bibharṣy asaṁvṛtaḥ
sthānāya sattvaṁ jagato jagat-pate
kālaḥ pradhānaṁ puruṣo bhavān paraḥ

Desiring to create, O unborn master, you increase and then assume the mode of passion. You do likewise with the mode of ignorance when you wish to annihilate the universe and with goodness when you wish to maintain it. Nonetheless, you remain uncovered by these modes. You are time, the *pradhāna,* and the *puruṣa,* O Lord of the universe, yet still you are separate and distinct.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

You alone (*vai*) accept *rajoguṇa* (*utkaṭam)* since creation cannot take place with equilibrium. O lord, you are capable of creating this variegated universe (*prabho*). By your nature you protect the universe (*jagat-pate*). You are not covered by the actions of creation, maintenance and destruction. Or though you accept ignorance for destruction, you are not covered by it.

Text 59.30

ahaṁ payo jyotir athānilo nabho
mātrāṇi devā mana indriyāṇi
kartā mahān ity akhilaṁ carācaraṁ
tvayy advitīye bhagavan ayaṁ bhramaḥ

This is an illusion: that earth, water, fire, air, ether, sense objects, devatās, mind, the senses, false ego and the total material energy exist independent of you. In fact, they are all within you, my Lord, who are one without a second.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates all. The word *ca* (in another version) indicates *buddhi* and *citta.* They all exist in you. Seeing them as separate entities is an illusion (*bhramaḥ*), though matter is eternal and real.

"Then what is the fault?" You are without compare (*advitīye*). *Ekam evādvitīyam*: the Lord is one without a second. (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1) Though moving and non-moving beings are not different from you,

they are also different. O Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*)! Belonging to you, they are not separate. But you, being Bhagavān, are also separate.

Or everything is in you, who are without a second. What is the mistake since you are the container and everything is in you? There is no mistake. As your *aṁśas*, the *jīvas*, having *svarūpas* of eternity, knowledge and bliss, are not different from you, having conscious forms. Still, they are like waves in the ocean. There is a difference between the ocean and the waves. That is indicated by O Bhagavān! The waves are not the ocean and the *jīvas* are not the Lord.

Text 59.31

tasyātmajo 'yaṁ tava pāda-paṅkajaṁ
bhītaḥ prapannārti-haropasāditaḥ
tat pālayainaṁ kuru hasta-paṅkajaṁ
śirasy amuṣyākhila-kalmaṣāpaham

Here is the son [of Bhaumāsura]. Frightened, he is approaching your lotus feet, since you remove the distress of all who seek refuge in you. Please protect him. Place your lotus hand, which dispels all sins, upon his head.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"Please say what should be done." Here is his son. She does not mention Bhaumāsura's name because he was very wicked. "If he is wicked, even if he is your son, he should be killed." He has approached you. He has surrendered to you. You should destroy the sorrow caused by his father, O destroyer of suffering for the surrendered! Therefore, make him fearless. Place your hand on his head. "If I do that, then he will perform evil actions like his father." That hand destroys all sin. By the power of the touch of your hand he will not commit offenses. The hand is compared to a lotus because it removes all suffering.

Text 59.32

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti bhūmy-arthito vāgbhir bhagavān bhakti-namrayā
dattvābhayaṁ bhauma-gṛham prāviśat sakalarddhimat

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus entreated by Goddess Bhūmi in words of humble devotion, the Supreme Lord bestowed fearlessness upon her grandson and then entered Bhaumāsura's palace, which was filled with all manner of riches.

COMMENTARY: Worshipped by her words, the Lord was pleased. Instead of *arcitaḥ* sometimes *arthitaḥ* (pleaded) is seen. By the excellence of her words, the Lord was pleased. The words were filled with *bhakti*. The Lord, full of mercy (*bhagavān*), bestowed fearlessness to the boy and then entered the palace, to relieve the envy of Satyabhāmā or by getting off Garuḍa. Or he entered with Satyabhāmā, with Garudā, with Bhūmī, with Bhagadatta and with the guardians of the treasury. Because it was the house of the son of Bhūmī, it was full of wealth.

The wealth of the city is described in *Hari-vaṁśa:*

na vai rājñā kubereṇa na śakreṇa yamena ca
ratna-saṁnicayas tādṛg dṛṣṭa-pūrvo na ca śrutaḥ

Never had such quantity of jewels been seen or heard of by any king, Kuvera, Indra or Yama.

The demons guarded the jewels.

deva-gandharva-ratnāni panna-gānāṁ ca yad vasu
tāni sarvāṇi santīha narakasya niveśane

All the jewels of the *devatās* and Gandharvas and snakes were in Naraka's palace.

Text 59.33

tatra rājanya-kanyānāṁ ṣaṭ-sahasrādhikāyutam
bhaumāhṛtānāṁ vikramya rājabhyo dadṛśe hariḥ

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw sixteen thousand royal maidens, whom Bhauma had taken by force from various kings.

COMMENTARY: *Hariḥ* indicates that he was attractive to the princesses.

Text 59.34

tam praviṣṭaṁ striyo vīkṣya nara-varyaṁ vimohitāḥ
manasā vavrire 'bhīṣṭaṁ patiṁ daivopasāditam

The women became enchanted when they saw that most excellent of males enter. In their minds they each accepted him, who had been brought there by destiny, as their chosen husband.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Seeing him directly (*vi-īkṣya*) the women were bewildered by the Lord. He was completely desired (*abhi-iṣṭam*), for a long time. He was rare to achieve but they achieved him by previous *bhakti* (*daivopasāditam*). They accepted him as their husband.

nivasantyo yathā devyaḥ sukhinyaḥ kāma-varjitāḥ
parivavrur mahā-bāhum eka-veṇī-dharāḥ striyaḥ
sarvāḥ kāṣāya-vāsinyaḥ sarvāś ca niyatendriyāḥ
vratopavāsa-tattvajñāḥ kāṅkṣantyaḥ kṛṣṇa-darśanam

The women living there, devoid of material desire, wearing single braids, accepted Kṛṣṇa in joy. They were all wearing soiled garments. Controlling their senses, practicing vows and fasting, knowing the truth, they desired to see Kṛṣṇa. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Text 59.35

bhūyāt patir ayaṁ mahyaṁ dhātā tad anumodatām
iti sarvāḥ pṛthak kṛṣṇe bhāvena hṛdayaṁ dadhuḥ

With the thought "May providence grant that this man become my husband," each and every princess absorbed her heart in contemplation of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: How did they accept him? They each made a vow. The singular is used to show the intensity of the vow of each individual. Thus the word *pṛthāk* is used. May the Lord (*dhātā*) who has special powers, since he protects the universe, make this man Kṛṣṇa, who attracts my heart, my husband.

Text 59.36

tāḥ prāhiṇod dvāravatīṁ su-mṛṣṭa-virajo-'mbarāḥ
nara-yānair mahā-kośān rathāśvān draviṇaṁ mahāt

The Lord had the princesses dressed in clean, spotless garments and then sent them in palanquins to Dvārakā, together with great treasures of chariots, horses and other valuables.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He sent them to Dvārakā in palanquins. How did they look? They wore clean cloth after bathing, to become spotless. They were sent along with wealth like jewels, cows and *sārika* birds. There was excellence because of quantity and value. Those guarding the wealth spoke as follows.

imāni maṇi-ratnāni vividhāni vasūni ca
goṣu cāpi bhavet yāvat kāmas tāvaj janārdana
tāvatīḥ prāpayiṣyāmo vṛṣṇy-andhaka-niveśanam
kāma-vyāhāriṇaś caiva pakṣiṇaḥ priya-darśanāḥ
candanāgaru-kāṣṭhāni tathā kālīyakāny api
vasu yat triṣu lokeṣu dharmeṇādhigataṁ tvayā

O Kṛṣṇa! All these jewels and various types of wealth which are here fulfill all desires. There is the same abundance of cows. We will take all of this to Dvārakā. There are pleasantly singing birds, pleasing to see. There are branches of sandalwood and *aguru*, turmeric and treasures of the three worlds which you have obtained by dharma. *Hari-vaṁśa*

Text 59.37

airāvata-kulebhāṁś ca catur-dantāṁs tarasvinaḥ
pāṇḍurāṁś ca catuḥ-ṣaṣṭiṁ prerayām āsa keśavaḥ

Kṛṣṇa also dispatched sixty-four swift white elephants, descendants of Airāvata, which each sported four tusks, as well as many other elephants.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The word *ca* indicates that besides the sixty-four swift elephants almost sixty thousand other elephants were also sent to Dvārakā. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

catur-daṁṣṭrān gajāṁś cāgryān ṣaṭ-sahasrāṁś ca dṛṣṭavān
kāṁbojānāṁ tathāśvānāṁ niyutāny eka-viṁśatim

tāḥ kanyāstāṁs tathā nāgāṁs tān aśvān dvārakāṁ purīm
prāpayām āsa govindaḥ sadyo naraka-kiṅkaraiḥ

He saw sixty thousand elephants with four tusks and twenty-one million horses from Kāmboja. He sent the princesses, the elephants and horses to Dvārakā along with the servants of Naraka.

Hari-vaṁśa gives this description of the guards:

bhīma-rūpāś ca mātaṅgāḥ pravāla-vikṛtāṅkuśāḥ
hema-sūtra-mahā-kakṣyāś cāpatomara-śālinaḥ
rucirābhiḥ patākābhir śavalā vividhāḥ kuthāḥ
te ca viṁśati-sāhasrā dvistāvatyaḥ kareṇavaḥ

The elephant keepers were ferocious. They had curved goads made of coral, shirts of gold thread and were equipped with bows and lances. They were made colorful with various attractive flags. They numbered twenty thousand. There were twice as many elephants.

Thus other than the four tusked elephants there were many more. The second *ca* indicates those elephants were also sent. Varuṇa's umbrella and the jeweled mountain were not sent to Dvārakā but were placed on Garuḍa and went to Svarga. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

ṭadṛśe vāruṇaṁ cchatraṁ tathaiva maṇi-parvatam
āropayām āsa harir garuḍe patageśvare

The Lord placed the umbrella of Varuṇa and the jewel mountain on Garuḍa.

tatas tad vāruṇaṁ chatraṁ svayam utkṣipya mādhavaḥ
hiraṇyavarṣaṁ kurvantam āruroha vihaṁgatam

Kṛṣṇa raised up the umbrella of Varuṇa, which produced a shower of gold, and mounted Garuḍa.

Later it is said:

tasya parvata-rājasya śṛṅgaṁ yat paramārcitam
vimalārkendu-saṁkāśaṁ maṇi-kāñcana-toraṇam
sapakṣi-gaṇa-mātaṅgaṁ samṛga-vyāla-pādapam
śākhā-mṛga-gaṇair juṣṭaṁ suprastara-śilātalam
nyaṅkubhiś ca varāhaiś ca rurubhiś ca niṣevitam

saprapāta-mahāsānuṁ vicitra-śikhara-drumam
atyadbhutam acintyaṁ ca mṛga-vṛnda-viloḍitam
jīvaṁjīvaka-saṁghaiś ca barhibhiś ca nisevitam
tad apy atibalo viṣṇur dorbhyām utpāṭya bhāsvaram
āropayām āsa tadā garuḍe pakṣiṇāṁ vare
maṇi-parvata-śṛṅgaṁ ca sabhāryaṁ ca janārdanam
uvāha līlayā pakṣī garuḍaḥ patatāṁ varaḥ

The peak of the king of mountains was worthy of supreme worship. It appeared to be a spotless sun and moon, a jeweled gate. It had birds, elephants, deer, snakes, monkey and trees. It was made of broad slabs of rock. On it lived antelope, boars and *rurus*. It had cliffs, huge plateaus, colorful peaks and trees. It was astonishing and inconceivable with herds of horses descended from Uccaiḥśravas. On it lived groups of partridges and peacocks. Mighty Kṛṣṇa lifted the shining mountain with his arms and placed it on Garuḍa, the best of birds. Garuḍa, the best of birds, carried the jeweled mountain peak along with Kṛṣṇa and his wife very easily.

Texts 59.38–39

gatvā surendra-bhavanaṁ dattvādityai ca kuṇḍale
pūjitas tridaśendreṇa mahendryāṇyā ca sa-priyaḥ
codito bhāryayotpāṭya pārījātaṁ garutmati
āropya sendrān vibudhān nirjityopānayat puram

The Lord then went to the abode of Indra and gave mother Aditi her earrings; there Indra and his wife worshiped Kṛṣṇa and his beloved consort Satyabhāmā. Then, at Satyabhāmā's behest the Lord uprooted the heavenly *pārijāta* tree and put it on the back of Garuḍa. After defeating Indra and all the other *devatās*, Kṛṣṇa brought the *pārijāta* to his capital.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

The details of going to Indra's abode are given in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

garuḍo vāruṇaṁ chatraṁ tathaiva maṇiparvatam
sabhāryaṁ ca hṛṣīkeśaṁ līlayaiva vahan yayau
tataḥ śaṅkham upādhmāsīt svarga-dvāra-gato hariḥ

upatasthus tathā devāḥ sārghya-pātrā janarjanam
sa devair arcitaḥ kṛṣṇo deva-mātur niveśanam
sitābhra-śikharākāraṁ praviśya dadṛśe 'ditim
sa tāṁ praṇamya śakreṇa saha te kuṇḍalottame
dadau naraka-nāśaṁ ca śaśaṁsāsyai janārdanaḥ

Garuḍa very easily carried the umbrella of Varuṇa, the jeweled mountain, Kṛṣṇa and his wife, and went to Svarga. The Lord blew his conch when he arrived at the gate of Svarga. The *devatās* arrived and worshipped Kṛṣṇa with *arghya.* After being worshipped, Kṛṣṇa entered Aditi'ṣ abode, which resembled a shining peak, and saw her. He offered her respects along with Indra, and presented her with her excellent earrings. He described to Indra the killing of Naraka.

Later it is said:

adityā tu kṛtānujño devarājo janārdanam
yathāvatpūjayāmāsa bahumāna-puraḥsaram

Indra, in gratitude, along with Aditi, worshipped Kṛṣṇa sufficiently, showing great respect.

Hari-vaṁśa says:

so 'rcito deva-rājena ratnaiś ca pratipūjitaḥ
satyabhāmā ca paulomyā yathāvad abhinanditā

He was worshipped by Indra and presented with jewels. Satyabhāmā was welcomed by Indra's wife properly.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes how his wife requested the *pārijāta.*

dadarśa ca sugandhāḍhyaṁ mañjarī-puñja-dhāriṇam
śaityāhlādakaraṁ tāmra-bāla-pallava-śobhitam
mathyamāne 'mṛte jātaṁ jāta-rūpamaya-tvacam
pārijātaṁ jagannāthaḥ keśavaḥ keśi-sūdanaḥ
taṁ dṛṣṭvā prāha govindaṁ satyabhāmā dvijottama
kasmān na dvārakām eṣa nīyate kṛṣṇa pādapaḥ
yadi cet tvad vacaḥ satyaṁ satyātyarthaṁ priyeti me
mad geha-niṣkuṭārthāya tad ayaṁ nīyatāṁ taruḥ
na me jāṁbavatī tādṛg abhīṣṭā na ca rukmiṇī
satye yathā tvam ity uktaṁ tvayā kṛṣṇāsakṛt-priyam

satyaṁ tad yadi govinda nopacāra-kṛtaṁ vacaḥ
tad astu pārijāto ʼyaṁ mama geha-vibhūṣaṇam
bibhratī pārijātasya keśa-pakṣeṇa mañjarīm
sapatnīnām ahaṁ madhye śobheyam iti kāmaye

Kṛṣṇa saw the *pārijāta,* which was filled with fragrance, laden with masses of buds, producing coolness and joy, decorated with pink, young shoots and golden bark. It has been produced from the churning of the Milk Ocean. On seeing that tree, Satyabhāmā spoke to Kṛṣṇa. O best of the *brāhmaṇas*!

"O Kṛṣṇa! Why can this tree not be brought to Dvārakā? If your words are true and I am really dear to you, please bring that tree for the garden in my house. O Kṛṣṇa! You have many times said that you do not desire Jāmbavatī or Rukmiṇī as much as you desire me. O Govinda! If you have spoken true and your words are not just a decoration, then the *pārijāta* should decorate my house. Carrying a bud of the *pārijāta* in my hair, among all the co-wives I will be glorious. This is what I desire."

Completely conquering (*nir-jitya*) Indra, he brought the tree to Dvārakā as his reward (*upa-anayat*) for helping Indra.

Text 59.40

sthāpitaḥ satyabhāmāyā gṛhodyānopaśobhanaḥ
anvagur bhramarāḥ svargāt tad-gandhāsava-lampaṭāḥ

Once planted, the *pārijāta* tree beautified the garden of Queen Satyabhāmā's palace. Bees followed the tree all the way from heaven, greedy for its fragrance and sweet sap.

COMMENTARY: The bees, greedy for the nectar flew here and there, coming from Svarga with the plant. This verse glorifies the *pārijāta.* The bees, greedy for the nectar flew here and there, coming from Svarga with the plant. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* gives details:

yam abhyetya janaḥ sarvo jātiṁ smarati paurvikīm
vāsyate yasya puṣpottha-gandhenorvī tri-yojanam
tatas te yādavāḥ sarve dehabandhāna-mānuṣān
dadṛśuḥ pādape tasmin kurvanto mukha-darśanam

The smell of the tree perfumed the earth for three furlongs, and on approaching, it enabled everyone to recollect the events of a prior existence. On beholding their faces in that tree, all the Yādavas saw themselves in celestial forms.

nana-vidhāni tūryāṇi geyāni madhurāṇi ca
śuśruvus tasya vṛkṣasya nātidūragatā narāḥ
yo yaṁ saṁkalpayām āsa gandhaṁ hṛdyaṁ naras tadā
sa tadaiva tam ājaghre pārijāta-samudbhavam

People who were not far away could hear various instruments and sweet singing coming from the tree. Whoever had even a slight desire in their heart received that object immediately from the *pārijāta.*

manīṣitena sa tarur alpo bhavati bhārata
mahāṁś ca vāsudevasya tad adbhutam ivābhavat
kadācid dvārakāṁ sarvāṁ pracchādayati bhārata
kadācid dhasta-dhāryas tu bhavaty aṅguṣṭha-saṁnibhaḥ

By desire, the tree of Kṛṣṇa would become small or large. It was most remarkable. Sometime its branches covered the whole of Dvārakā. Sometimes it could be held in the hand, becoming as small as a thumb.

Varuṇa's umbrella was given to Indra. The jeweled mountain was brought to Dvārakā. *Hari-vaṁśa* describes this. Previously, concerning the construction of Dvārakā, it was said:

sudharmāṁ pārijātaṁ ca mahendraḥ prāhiṇod dhareḥ
yatra cāvasthito martyo martya-dharmair na yujyate

Indra brought Kṛṣṇa the Sudharmā assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the dharma of mortals. Indra also gave the *pārijāta* tree. SB 10.50.54

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the contradiction. Indra brought the *pārijāta* tree, or rather gave it up when Kṛṣṇa took it. Or after it was established by Indra, the Lord himself forcibly brought it again. *Hari-vaṁśa* mentions this three times, showing the difference in strength between Indra and Kṛṣṇa. Or the issue is resolved by saying that the Lord performed different pastimes in different kalpas.

Text 59.41

yayāca ānamya kirīṭa-koṭibhiḥ
pādau spṛśann acyutam artha-sādhanam
siddhārtha etena vigṛhyate mahān
aho surāṇāṁ ca tamo dhig āḍhyatām

Even after Indra had bowed down to Acyuta, touched his feet with the tips of his crown and begged the Lord to fulfill his desire, that exalted *devatā,* having achieved his purpose, chose to fight with the Supreme Lord. What ignorance there is among the gods! To hell with their opulence!

COMMENTARY: Previously Indra requested the Lord, touching the tip of his crown to his lotus feet and bowing down many times. This shows his great devotion. The Lord never fails to achieve fulfill desires (*acyutam*). Though he was great, being king of the *devatās* and a great devotee (*mahān*), he still fought with the Lord. *Aho* indicates astonishment or lamentation. What ignorance, though the *devatās* are endowed with pure sattva (*surānām*). This must happen because of intoxication with wealth. To hell with their wealth.

Text 59.42

atho muhūrta ekasmin nānāgāreṣu tāḥ striyaḥ
yathopayeme bhagavān tāvad-rūpa-dharo 'vyayaḥ

Then the imperishable Lord, assuming a separate form for each bride, duly married all the princesses simultaneously, each in her own palace.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates auspiciousness or all. Simultaneously, he married them because they were women. Because of the nature of women, they would envy each other, being rivals. As many as there were women, he manifested as many forms to marry them: sixteen thousand one hundred forms. All these forms were real and eternal. Or as if having many forms, the one Kṛṣṇa married them all simultaneously because he was full of all powers *(bhagavān*) and therefore inexhaustible (*avyayaḥ*).

Text 59.43

gṛheṣu tāsām anapāyy atarka-kṛn
nirasta-sāmyātiśayeṣv avasthitaḥ
reme ramābhir nija-kāma-sampluto
yathetaro gārhaka-medhikāṁś caran

The Lord, the performer of the inconceivable, constantly remained in each of his queens' palaces, which were unequaled and unexcelled by any other residence. There, although fully satisfied within himself, he enjoyed with his pleasing wives, and like an ordinary husband he carried out his household duties.

COMMENTARY: This is further explained. He was situated always (*anapāyī*) in all the houses of all the queens.

This was an inconceivable (*atarka-kṛt*) action. In one house he was enjoying, in another house he was also enjoying. His activities with each of them simultaneously were inconceivable. He did this, though he was complete in himself with his desires (*nija-kāma-saṁplūtaḥ*). Or being filled with desires he enjoyed. "Why?" These palaces were unequalled. Even Vaikuṇṭha could not compare, for in Vaikuṇṭha there is one Lakṣmī. Here, he enjoyed with many Lakṣmīs (*ramābhiḥ*). Or they pleased Kṛṣṇa more than Lakṣmī did. Thus he enjoyed with them.

And though he was the Supreme Lord, he enjoyed like an ordinary person to taste the sweetness of love. An example is given. He acted like a person without discrimination, who enjoys material happiness. Or the Lord was filled with desires concerning his devotees (*nija*), which were unlimited, a great ocean. The Lord was completely absorbed or had full attachment to those desires. Or he was filled with *prema-rasa* (*kāma*) different from material desire, more astonishing than the most astonishing, though for him they were normal desires.

Text 59.44

itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patiṁ striyas tā
brahmādayo 'pi na viduḥ padavīṁ yadīyām
bhejur mudāviratam edhitayānurāga
hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-jalpa-lajjāḥ

Thus those women obtained as their husband the husband of the goddess of fortune, although even great *devatās* like Brahmā do not know how to approach him. With ever-increasing pleasure, they experienced loving attraction for him, exchanged smiling glances with him and reciprocated with him in ever-fresh intimacy, replete with joking and feminine shyness.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa, rare and skillful in love, was the husband of Rukmiṇī. These women (*tā*) having inconceivable credits attained him as a husband, independently. They were qualified (*śtriyaḥ*). Brahmā and others do not even know his feet, what to speak of knowing or attaining Kṛṣṇa himself. They enjoyed with him constantly because they perceived him as ever fresh (*nava-saṅgama*). They exchanged loving glances, associated and then spoke shyly. The pleasure continually increased. This shows it was greater than the bliss of Brahman. Brahman's bliss does not increase (since it never changes). The love however increased at all times, with special sweetness, being ever new, attaining the highest levels.

Text 59.45

pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pada-śauca-
tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ
keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ
dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāsyam

Although the Supreme Lord's queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching him humbly, offering him a seat, worshiping him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging his feet, giving him betel-nut to chew, fanning him, anointing him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning him with flower garlands, dressing his hair, arranging his bed, bathing him, and presenting him with various gifts.

COMMENTARY: They were without pride, and were never fully satisfied. Rather, because of intense *prema*, they acted as servants, doing various services. Seeing him from far off, they rose from their seats and came to him (*pratyudgama*). They respected him with kind words, holding umbrellas. "How fortunate we are. Victory to you!" Giving up household duties, they sought to be close to him.

Or they experienced fear or confusion, as chaste women with a husband, or with a first meeting. Or they offered a seat and betel-nut with timidity. They washed his feet and spread his bed (*śayana*). They offered various foods and drinks worthy of presenting (*upahāryaiḥ*). They performed various services for the lord of their life (*vibhoḥ*). They did this with great *prema*, and experienced special bliss. This is well known (*sma*). One should have no doubt about their ability. Thus in three verses (43-45) Śukadeva describes the good fortune of the queens of the Lord in Dvārakā because of the arousal of their special *bhāva*. Later he will say at the end:

yāḥ samparyacaran premṇā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ
jagad-guruṁ bhartṛ-buddhyā tāsāṁ kim varṇyate tapaḥ

And how could one possibly describe the greatness of the worship performed by other women, who serve the Supreme Lord, thinking of him as their husband, by mentally massaging his feet. SB 10.90.27

Chapter Sixty
Kṛṣṇa Teases Rukmiṇī

Text 60.1

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
karhicit sukham āsīnaṁ sva-talpa-sthaṁ jagad-gurum
patiṁ paryacarad bhaiṣmī vyajanena sakhī-janaiḥ

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Once, in the company of her maidservants, Queen Rukmiṇī was personally serving her husband, the spiritual master of the universe, by fanning him as he relaxed on her bed.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Śukadeva now speaks of the love quarrel between Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa which are suitable in speaking about the events after Aniruddha's marriage. This quarrel indicates special *rasa* in the pastimes with the queens. The whole chapter deals with this. One time, while happily engaging in married life, Rukmiṇī was serving Kṛṣṇa, seated on her bed since he was greater than anyone (*jagad-gurum*), and particularly because he was the object of her love since he was her husband. By her friends she served him with various articles, and finally with the fan she personally served him. This is implied because it is proper that one-person fans rather than many, and verse 7 mentions that she alone took a *cāmara*.

Text 60.2

yas tv etal līlayā viśvaṁ sṛjaty atty avatīśvaraḥ
sa hi jātaḥ sva-setūnāṁ gopīthāya yaduṣv ajaḥ

The unborn Lord, the supreme controller, who creates, maintains and then devours this universe simply as his play, took birth among the Yadus to preserve his own laws.

COMMENTARY: Having indicated the good fortune of Rukmiṇī in serving such a husband, this verse shows how he is *jagad-guru.* The word *tu* means it is well known. As the controller of *prakṛti* (*īśvaraḥ),* the *puruṣa avatāras,* he creates this universe with various amazing features (*etad*). With no

dependence on anything, he plays like a child. Or why does he create the world? No one can understand. Or as the protector, he creates the world so that all the *jīvas* can reach the supreme abode by enjoying their karmas.

He alone (*hi*), Svayam Bhagavān, has appeared for birth pastimes among the Yadus, even though he is unborn, in order to protect the modes of conduct established by the *puruṣa avatāras.* Thus, it is suitable that he has more astonishing and sweet pastimes than creating the world.

Texts 60.3–6

tasmin antar-gṛhe bhrājan-muktā-dāma-vilambinā
virājite vitānena dīpair maṇi-mayair api
mallikā-dāmabhiḥ puṣpair dvirepha-kula-nādite
jāla-randhra-praviṣṭaiś ca gobhiś candramaso 'malaiḥ
pārijāta-vanāmoda-vāyunodyāna-śālinā
dhūpair aguru-jai rājan jāla-randhra-vinirgataiḥ
payaḥ-phena-nibhe śubhre paryaṅke kaśipūttame
upatasthe sukhāsīnaṁ jagatām īśvaraṁ patim

Rukmiṇī's quarters were extremely beautiful, boasting a canopy hung with brilliant strings of pearls, as well as effulgent jewels serving as lamps. Garlands of jasmine and other flowers hung here and there, attracting swarms of humming bees, and the spotless rays of the moon shone through the holes of the lattice windows. As *aguru* incense drifted out of the window holes, my dear king, the breeze wafting the scent of the *pārijāta* grove carried the mood of a garden into the room. There the Queen served her husband, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, as he reclined upon an opulent pillow on her bed, which was as soft and white as the foam of milk.

COMMENTARY: The place where the pastime took place is now described in seven lines. To describe their *prema,* first the articles acting as *uddīpanas* for Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī are described. Three and a half verses include the description of the house and the bed. The room was lit naturally by jewels (*rājite*), and particularly bright (*vi-rājite)* because of the canopies and jeweled lamps. Strings of jasmines decorated the doorways and other flowers were sprinkled here and there. The proper setting is thus described.

The pastime began in the evening. *Pārijāta* plants had been established in each of the queens' houses by Indra previously for pleasing all the queens. Not only was there the fragrance of the *pārijāta* but the fragrance of many other flowers in the garden (*udyāna).* The breeze was cool because of the cool garden. Not only was it cool but very gentle. *Aguru* incense streamed out everywhere (*vi-nirgataḥ*) through the lattice holes. Seeing Parīkṣit shining with joy on hearing this, Śukadeva calls to him. O shining king (*rājan*)!

Out of joy, the method of serving the Lord is described in two lines. In the room, there was a bed with an excellent pillow. The description of her serving is repeated to indicate her pleasure in serving.

Text 60.7

vāla-vyajanam ādāya ratna-daṇḍaṁ sakhī-karāt
tena vījayatī devī upāsāṁ cakra īśvaram

From her maidservant's hand Goddess Rukmiṇī took a yak-hair fan with a jeweled handle, and then she began to worship her master by fanning Him.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes how she served him with the *cāmara* or a small fan made of feathers. This was very soft. The word *devī* indicates her great beauty while serving in this manner. Or it means she was a queen.

Text 60.8

sopācyutaṁ kvaṇayatī maṇi-nūpurābhyāṁ
reje 'ṅgulīya-valaya-vyajanāgra-hastā
vastrānta-gūḍha-kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāra-
bhāsā nitamba-dhṛtayā ca parārdhya-kāñcyā

Her hand adorned with rings, bangles and the *cāmara* fan, Rukmiṇī looked resplendent standing near Kṛṣṇa. Her jeweled ankle-bells tinkled, and her necklace glittered, reddened by the *kuṅkuma* from her breasts, which were covered by the end of her *sāri.* On her hips she wore a priceless belt.

COMMENTARY: Having shown how she served him, she is described, to show the cause of his affection for her. Her feet, hands, chest, and waist were all most beautiful. By fanning him, by moving all her limbs, the ornaments sounded.

Text 60.9

tāṁ rūpiṇīṁ śrīyam ananya-gatiṁ nirīkṣya
yā līlayā dhṛta-tanor anurūpa-rūpā
prītaḥ smayann alaka-kuṇḍala-niṣka-kaṇṭha-
vaktrollasat-smita-sudhāṁ harir ābabhāṣe

As he contemplated her, the actual goddess of fortune, who desires only him, Kṛṣṇa smiled. The Lord assumes various forms to enact his pastimes, and he was pleased with her form as it was just suitable for her to serve him. Her charming face was adorned with curling hair, earrings, a locket on her neck, and the nectar of her bright, happy smile. The Lord then spoke to her as follows.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Rukmiṇī (*rūpinīm*) had beauty and qualities superior to Lakṣmī and others in Vaikuṇṭha. The ending on the word (*ū-iṇīm*) indicates praise. The reason for her beauty is explained. She had a form suitable for his form that he uses in his pastimes. It is said of Kṛṣṇa:

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his *yoga-māyā.* That form astonishes even the lord of Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

Similarly she appeared with the most exceptional beauty among all the Lord's consorts. He was pleased with her, experiencing special love (*prītaḥ*). He smiled because of her joking words and, since she was dedicated only to him (*ananya-gatim*), he spoke to her with a special play on words (*ā-*

babhāṣe), because he steals the composure of his dear devotees by his jokes (*hariḥ*). Or, he spoke so that in every word she lamented (*ā-babhāṣe*). He should not have spoken in that way since such words were unsuitable for her.

Text 60.10

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
rāja-putrīpsitā bhūpair loka-pāla-vibhūtibhiḥ
mahānubhāvaiḥ śrīmadbhī rūpaudārya-balorjitaiḥ

The Supreme Lord said: My dear princess, you were sought after by many kings as powerful as the rulers of planets. They were all abundantly endowed with political influence, wealth, beauty, generosity and physical strength.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He speaks of the reason she chose him, as if he were ignorant, in three verses (10-12). O daughter of a king, endowed with a wealth of beauty and qualities! You were desired by many kings at the *svayaṁvara* ceremony long before. This is described in *Hari-vaṁśa.* They had great influence (*mahānubhāvaiḥ*) and wealth (*śrīmadbhiḥ*) (or wealth and glory).

Text 60.11

tān prāptān arthino hitvā caidyādīn smara-durmadān
dattā bhrātrā sva-pitrā ca kasmān no vavṛṣe 'samān

Since your brother and father offered you to them, why did you reject the King of Cedi and all those other suitors, who stood before you, maddened by Cupid? Why, instead, did you choose me, though I am not at all your equal?

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Why did you reject those who personally came (*prāptān*) and requested you (*arthinaḥ*) and who were moreover completely maddened by love? The word *ca* indicates this was most ridiculous. You were even given by your brother and father to Śiśupāla, though he is an object of laughter. The

word *sva* indicates that the daughter was dependent on her father. Therefore, you should not have rejected the kings. Why did you choose me, who cannot compare with them? The plural *naḥ* is used to indicate the singular. (Pāṇini 1.2.51) Or why did you choose persons like us, the Yādavas, as a husband. The perfect tense is used to indicate a completed action. If you had not yet chosen, I would have stopped you from this choice.

Text 60.12

rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gatān
balavadbhiḥ kṛta-dveṣān prāyas tyakta-nṛpāsanān

Terrified of these kings, O lovely-browed one, I took shelter in the ocean. I have become enemies of powerful men, and I practically abandoned the royal throne.

COMMENTARY: I am not suitable as your husband since I have faults like fear. Out of fear of kings, I have taken shelter of the ocean. "Why be afraid of the kings?" I have made enemies of powerful kings. "But you are also strong." I have given up the throne because I have no kingdom and no army. Or I am without the accoutrements of a king. Or a princess should marry a prince. I am not suitable since I have given up the throne. This is general (*prāyaḥ*), since sometimes I accept the accoutrements of a king. The word *prāyaḥ* should be applied to the whole statement. O beautiful woman (*subhru*)! You have beauty. Why consider this marriage at all?

Text 60.13

aspaṣṭa-vartmanām puṁsām aloka-patham īyuṣām
āsthitāḥ padavīṁ su-bhru prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ

O fine-browed lady, women are usually destined to suffer when they stay with men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society.

COMMENTARY: I am not suitable for marriage because I am so different from others. Women suffer at all times, in all ways, greatly (*prāyaḥ*) from such men. Or those who take shelter of unsteady men only slightly without

marrying them do not suffer. By taking shelter of me with attachment you will suffer.

Text 60.14

niṣkiñcanā vayaṁ śaśvan niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ
tasmāt prāyeṇa na hy āḍhyā māṁ bhajanti su-madhyame

I have no material possessions, and I am dear to those who similarly have nothing. Therefore, O slender one, the wealthy hardly ever worship me.

COMMENTARY: Since I have no wealth, I am not suitable to be married. Or since I am poor, I am dear to poor people, not wealthy kings. "You may not have wealth, but you can become wealthy by making friends with people who have wealth." I am friendly with the poor or the poor are friendly to me. This is constant in both cases. The wealthy do not worship me to increase their wealth by offering wealth. Thus, you should not worship me if you expect an increase in wealth by offering your wealth.

Text 60.15

yayor ātma-samaṁ vittaṁ janmaiśvaryākṛtir bhavaḥ
tayor vivāho maitrī ca nottamādhamayoḥ kvacit

Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior.

COMMENTARY: I am not suitable for marriage because of great difference, which is contrary to custom, and because of embarrassment. The couple should have the same form and same age (*bhavaḥ*). This is also true of friends (*maitrī*). Or not only should they marry, but they also (*ca*) will be friends. Otherwise, they cannot be friends because they are contrary to each other. This is confirmed by stating the opposite. One party has wealth. The other party is poor. They should not at any time or place get married.

Text 60.16

vaidarbhy etad avijñāya tvayādīrgha-samīkṣayā
vṛtā vayaṁ guṇair hīnā bhikṣubhiḥ ślāghitā mudhā

.

O Vaidarbhī, not being farsighted, you didn't realize this, and therefore you chose me as your husband, even though I have no good qualities and, being a fool, am glorified only by people desiring money.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

He summarizes his point. Not considering carefully all that I have said (*etat*) you chose me. You have said, "You are endowed with all good qualities by your nature. Hearing about those qualities (SB 10.52.37), I understood all about you." But I was praised by persons simply because they were greedy for money. O princess from Vidarbha, you heard from a great distance away. It should not be said that in giving them money I showed the quality of generosity, because I, being a fool (*mūḍhāh*), made people praise me out of greed for you, though they did not desire money.

Text 60.17

athātmano 'nurūpaṁ vai bhajasva kṣatriyarṣabham
yena tvam āśiṣaḥ satyā ihāmutra ca lapsyase

Now you should definitely accept a more suitable husband, a first-class man of the royal order who can help you achieve everything you want, both in this life and the next.

COMMENTARY: You should serve only a person of similar qualities, a great *kṣatriya* like Arjuna, born in the dynasty of Puru. By him you will attain your fixed or highest (*satyāḥ*) desires.

Text 60.18

caidya-śālva-jarāsandha dantavakrādayo nṛpāḥ
mama dviṣanti vāmoru rukmī cāpi tavāgrajaḥ

Kings like Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha and Dantavakra all hate me, O beautiful-thighed one, and so does your elder brother Rukmī.

COMMENTARY: The order of hatred is from the most intense (Śiśupāla) to the least intense. Though you are my devotee, your elder brother also hates me. Kṛṣṇa uses the singular (*mama*) here though in other places he

uses the plural. That is because in showing their hatred, he is not prominent.

Text 60.19

teṣāṁ vīrya-madāndhānāṁ dṛptānāṁ smaya-nuttaye
ānitāsi mayā bhadre tejopaharatāsatām

It was to dispel the arrogance of these kings that I carried you away, my good woman, for they were blinded by the intoxication of power. My purpose was to curb the strength of the wicked.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

It is not my fault. They hate me because of their evil natures. They have lost all discrimination because of intoxication with their power or strength (*vīrya*). Thus they have become proud (*dṛptānām*). To curb their pride (*smaya-nuttaye*) I took you away. The real purpose was to curb the strength of the wicked. My goal was to take you away, not to marry you.

Text 60.20

udāsīnā vayaṁ nūnaṁ na stry-apatyārtha-kāmukāḥ
ātma-labdhyāsmahe pūrṇā gehayor jyotir-akriyāḥ

We care nothing for wives, children and wealth. Always satisfied within ourselves, we do not work for body and home, but remain detached like Paramātmā.

COMMENTARY: "Being defeated by kings, I am afraid of them." That was emphasized. Being wicked, they always try to find fault. *Nūnam* means certainly. In the list, the later elements are causes of the previous. I am complete because of realizing my own bliss (*ātma-labdhyā*). The list in the verses gives increasing causes for not being qualified for marriage.

Api me pūrṇa-kāmasya navaṁ navam idaṁ priyam: though I am full in my desire, this person is ever dear to me. (*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*) Since the Lord depends on the devotee and *bhakti*, the Lord's statement is not true, but stated as a joke. All his statements have the opposite meaning.

Text 60.21

śrī-śuka uvāca
etāvad uktvā bhagavān ātmānaṁ vallabhām iva
manyamānām aviśleṣāt tad-darpa-ghna upāramat

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī had thought herself especially beloved by the Lord because he never left her company. By saying these things to her he vanquished her pride, and then he stopped speaking.

COMMENTARY: She thought herself as a beloved. Actually, she generally considers herself the servant, because of humility arising from the nature of great *prema*. At Kurukṣetra she later says:

caidyāya mārpayitum udyata-kārmukeṣu
rājasv ajeya-bhaṭa-śekharitāṅghri-reṇuḥ
ninye mṛgendra iva bhāgam ajāvi-yūthāt
tac-chrī-niketa-caraṇo 'stu mamārcanāya

When all the kings held their bows at the ready to assure that I would be presented to Śiśupāla, he who puts the dust of his feet on the heads of invincible warriors took me from their midst, as a lion forcibly takes his prey from the midst of goats and sheep. May I always be allowed to worship those feet of Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Lakṣmī. SB 10.83.8

The word *iva* can also be linked to the later word: *manyamānām iva*. She apparently thought like this. She did not actually think like that and thus her pride being destroyed was also only apparent. She actually had no pride. This happened only because he was teasing her. In verse 20 it is said that she could not understand the full meaning of his teasing. He will also say:

mā mā vaidarbhy asūyethā jāne tvāṁ mat-parāyaṇām
tvad-vacaḥ śrotu-kāmena kṣvelyācaritam aṅgane

O Vaidarbhī, do not be displeased with me. I know that you are fully devoted to me. I only spoke in jest, dear lady, because I wanted to hear what you would say. SB 10.60.29

Text 60.22

iti trilokeśa-pates tadātmanaḥ
priyasya devy aśruta-pūrvam apriyam

āśrutya bhītā hṛdi jāta-vepathuś
cintāṁ durantāṁ rudatī jagāma ha

Goddess Rukmiṇī had never before heard such unpleasant words from her beloved, the Lord of universal rulers, and she became frightened. A tremor arose in her heart, and in terrible anxiety she began to cry.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

It was explained in connection to the *rāsa* dance that there are two types of *prema*. Pride and anger (*māna*) do not appear in those who have *dakṣina* (compliant) *prema.* When joking occurs, there is a manifestation of worrying. That is described in this verse. She heard unkind words from the protector of the lords of the three worlds. Since he protects everyone, he should not use such harsh words. And he was her dear lover. And she was the chief among all his dear consorts (*devī*). She had never before heard such unkind words. She could not fathom his most intolerable motive.

She heard this intensely, at close quarters (*ā-śrutvā*). She feared so much that he would leave her that her heart trembled continuously. Her intense thoughts generated complete disturbance in her mind which continued for a long time or with dread (*durantam*). The word *ha* indicates dismay that he had transgressed proper conduct.

Text 60.23

padā su-jātena nakhāruṇa-śrīyā
bhuvaṁ likhanty aśrubhir añjanāsitaiḥ
āsiñcatī kuṅkuma-rūṣitau stanau
tasthāv adho-mukhy ati-duḥkha-ruddha-vāk

With her tender foot, effulgent with the reddish glow of her nails, she scratched the ground, and tears darkened by her eye makeup sprinkled her kuṅkuma-reddened breasts. There she stood, face downward, her voice choked up by extreme sorrow.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because her foot was tender, she should not have scratched the ground with her foot. This shows her terrified state of mind. Similarly, her dark tears, in streams, completely *(ā-siñcatī*) covering her *kuṅkuma* powdered breasts, showed this. The redness of her breasts reflected down to redden her toe nails (*nakhāruṇa-śrīyā*).

Text 60.24

tasyāḥ su-duḥkha-bhaya-śoka-vinaṣṭa-buddher
hastāc chlathad-valayato vyajanaṁ papāta
dehaś ca viklava-dhiyaḥ sahasaiva muhyan
rambheva vāyu-vihato pravikīrya keśān

Rukmiṇī's mind was overwhelmed with unhappiness, fear and grief. Her bangles slipped from her hand, and her fan fell to the ground. In her bewilderment she suddenly fainted, her hair scattering all about as her body fell to the ground like a plantain tree blown over by the wind.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

"He did this out of jest since that is his nature. Moreover, it was impossible for him to give her up because they had sons and daughters. Why did she not consider this at all?" She lost all discrimination because she lost intelligence, since she was most compliant (*dākṣiṇya*). Her bracelets fell off without her being aware. Not only she lost discrimination, but she lost consciousness (*viklava-dhiyaḥ*) and fainted, so that her hair scattered completely. She fell down completely like a banana tree blown down by the wind.

Text 60.25

tad dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ priyāyāḥ prema-bandhanam
hāsya-prauḍhim ajānantyāḥ karuṇaḥ so 'nvakampata

Seeing that his beloved was so bound to him in love that she could not understand the full meaning of his teasing, merciful Kṛṣṇa felt compassion for her.

COMMENTARY: She had the strongest, indescribable bondage of *prema* but she was unable to consider his joking, since she lacked *vāmya-prema.* Though he was most inclined to joke, he had compassion on her because he was merciful to all beings (*karuṇaḥ*), what to speak of her, because he was Bhagavān, manifesting unlimited qualities, since he was Kṛṣṇa, the great ocean of inconceivable variety and greatness or the attractor of the heart of his beloved. Therefore, he was merciful to her. Or being the personification of *karuṇa-rasa* for his devotees when they cry, he showed compassion.

Text 60.26

paryaṅkād avaruhyāśu tām utthāpya catur-bhujaḥ
keśān samuhya tad-vaktraṁ prāmṛjat padma-pāṇinā

The Lord quickly got down from the bed. Manifesting four arms, he picked her up, gathered her hair and caressed her face with his lotus hand.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

His compassion is shown in three verses. He raised her from the ground and placed her in his lap. He wiped her face continually (*pra-amṛjat*).

Texts 60.27–28

pramṛjyāśru-kale netre stanau copahatau śucā
āśliṣya bāhunā rājan ananya-viṣayāṁ satīm
sāntvayām āsa sāntva-jñaḥ kṛpayā kṛpaṇāṁ prabhuḥ
hāsya-prauḍhi-bhramac-cittām atad-arhāṁ satāṁ gatiḥ

Wiping her tear-filled eyes and her breasts, which were stained by tears of grief, the Supreme Lord, the goal of his devotees, embraced his chaste wife, who desired nothing but him, O king. Expert in the art of pacification, Kṛṣṇa tenderly consoled pitiable Rukmiṇī, whose mind was bewildered by his proud joking and who did not deserve to suffer so.

COMMENTARY: Her eyes flowed with tears. Hearing this, Parīkṣit became filled with sorrow. Śukadeva comforts him. O king! Or *rājan* stands for *arājan*: Rukmiṇī was faded in complexion because of pain, because she had

no other shelter (*ananya-viṣayām*), since she was dedicated to her husband (*satīm*). He used one arm to put her on his lap in alarm. He wiped her eyes with one hand, and her breasts with the other. Or it means two arms. He embraced her tightly. He was capable of pacifying her (*prabhuḥ*) because he knew sweet speech (*sāntva-jñaḥ*). Her heart was disturbed by worry. He should not have joked with her so seriously since he was the goal of the devotees (*satāṁ gatiḥ*).

Text 60.29

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mā mā vaidarbhy asūyethā jāne tvāṁ mat-parāyaṇām
tvad-vacaḥ śrotu-kāmena kṣvelyācaritam aṅgane

The Supreme Lord said: O Vaidarbhī, do not be displeased with me. I know that you are fully devoted to me. I only spoke in jest, dear lady, because I wanted to hear what you would say.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Do not find fault with me, Rukmiṇī. "You want to give me up, though I am fully dedicated to you. Why should I not feel hatred?" I know that you are devoted to me. Therefore never, under any circumstance, can I give you up. "Why did you speak like that?" I wanted to hear your words. "Since you are said to be truthful, you should not have spoken lies." I only wanted to have some fun. O Rukmiṇī, possessing beautiful limbs (*aṅgane*). He praises her.

Text 60.30

mukhaṁ ca prema-saṁrambha-sphuritādharam īkṣitum
kaṭā-kṣepāruṇāpāṅgaṁ sundara-bhru-kuṭī-taṭam

I also wanted to see your face with lips trembling in loving anger, the reddish corners of your eyes throwing sidelong glances and the line of your beautiful eyebrows knit in a frown.

COMMENTARY: It is not proper to say such words which cause suffering. That is true, but I wanted to see your special physical beauty. Though the words *prema-saṁrambha* (anger in love) are in a compound, they should also be joined with the next two phrases. The list is in order of increasing

excellence of beauty or anger. If he did not speak in this way, she would not have become angry, and her beauty would not have manifested.

Text 60.31

ayaṁ hi paramo lābho gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinām
yan narmair īyate yāmaḥ priyayā bhīru bhāmini

The greatest pleasure worldly householders can enjoy at home is to spend time joking with their beloved wives, my dear timid and temperamental one.

COMMENTARY: This certainly is the greatest happiness (*lābhaḥ*) in the houses for householders initiated into the dharma of the house with five sacrifices (*pañca-yajña*[1]), etc. This happens in the house. If the husband is away, happiness would depend on other factors. Or it should happen privately in the house, not in an assembly. One cannot derive such happiness immediately from other types of enjoyment. One can enjoy one *prahara* (*yāmaḥ*) in this way. You are dearer to me than anyone else (*priyayā*). Therefore, it is proper to joke with you in this way. O timid one! You become alarmed because a chaste woman has a timid nature. The quality of timidity does not manifest by calculation. (It is natural to you.) It is appropriate that you show anger in love, O angry woman (*bhāmini*), but should not show suffering.

Text 60.32

śrī-śuka uvāca
saivaṁ bhagavatā rājan vaidarbhī parisāntvitā
jñātvā tat-parihāsoktiṁ priya-tyāga-bhayaṁ jahau

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O king, Queen Vaidarbhī was fully pacified by the Lord and understood that his words had been spoken in jest. Thus she gave up her fear that her beloved would reject her.

COMMENTARY: She was pacified by the Lord endowed with all powers (*bhagavatā*). She became completely peaceful because she, though a young girl, had given up everything for him. Or she was capable of understanding the truth, since she was most intelligent (*vaidarbhī*). She

understood his statements were jokes. She gave up fear that he would give her up. But he was Bhagavān.

Or the reason she gave up fear was that she was Vaidarbhī, not a person of Mithilā. It was possible for a person of her high birth. "She should not trust him." As Rāma, he showed proper dharma and now it was not possible to go against his word, since he manifested all good qualities such as affection for the devotee. O king! She developed fear because of his words. Why have trust in the words of anyone else?

Text 60.33

babhāṣa ṛṣabhaṁ puṁsāṁ vīkṣantī bhagavan-mukham
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-rucira-snigdhāpāṅgena bhārata

Smiling bashfully as she cast charming, affectionate glances upon the face of the Lord, the best of males, Rukmiṇī spoke the following, O descendant of Bharata.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

She glanced at the face of Kṛṣṇa exhibiting the height of beauty and cleverness (*puṁsām ṛṣabham*). He was Bhagavān, endowed with beauty because of his affectionate smile and drops of perspiration. She glanced at him in a special way (*vi-īkṣya*), with glances moist with *prema,* attractive with smiles along with shyness. Her smile was mixed with shyness because she had to make an effort to show a proud smile. O Bhārata! Pay attention to this. You should understand this since the conversation between the two greatest persons spreads the glory of your great dynasty.

Text 60.34

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca
nanv evam etad aravinda-vilocanāha
yad vai bhavān bhagavato 'sadṛśī vibhūmnaḥ
kva sve mahimny abhirato bhagavāṁs try-adhīśaḥ
kvāhaṁ guṇa-prakṛtir ajña-gṛhīta-pādā

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: Actually, what you have said is true, O lotus-eyed one. I am indeed unsuitable for the almighty Lord. What comparison is there

between that Supreme Lord, who is master of the three primal deities and who delights in his own glory, and myself, a woman of mundane qualities whose feet are grasped by fools?

COMMENTARY: I am not suitable for you. What you say is true. But you are Bhagavān, filled with respect. This is certain (*vai)*. "Why is it certain?" You are filled with unlimited powers (*vibhūmnaḥ*). You have lotus eyes. I cannot compare in beauty to even one of your limbs, what to speak of having similar beauty in all limbs.

This is further explained. You are completely absorbed (*abhirataḥ*) in your own uncommon greatness, your bliss, because you are the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*) and the ruler (*adhīśaḥ*) of the three deities. I am just a woman, dependent, interested in material happiness. These three terms in the Lord, *sve mahimne abhirataḥ, bhagavān* and *tryādhīśaḥ*, should be explained as contrary to her: *aham, guṇa-prakrtiḥ* and *ajña-gṛhīta-pādā*. Or *bhagavān* can refer to *bhavān.* Thus *sve mahimne abhirataḥ* and *tryadhīśaḥ* are paired with *guṇa-prakṛtiḥ* and *ajña-gṛhīta-pādā.* Or you manifest glory by combining power and astonishment simultaneously in one action (*sve mahimni*). Brahmā says:

bhūmeḥ suretara-varūtha-vimarditāyāḥ
kleśa-vyayāya kalayā sita-kṛṣṇa-keśaḥ
jātaḥ kariṣyati janānupalakṣya-mārgaḥ
karmāṇi cātma-mahimopanibandhanāni

Kṛṣṇa, with skillfully bound up hair, whose method of attainment is unknown to men, having made his appearance to relieve the earth of the suffering caused by the armies of demons, and to relieve the devotees of their pain of separation, will perform activities whose sweetness will hide his powers. SB 2.7.26

This is possible because you are endowed with unlimited astonishing powers (*bhagavān*). And you are the Lord of the three worlds. I am one princess from the southern province of Vidarbha. I am a piece of matter with material qualities. Why then do kings of the three worlds seek you? They are fools and I control fools. I am most foolish. The contrast can be seen in opposite order. (You are lord of the three worlds whereas I am just a small princess; you are Bhagavān, beyond the *guṇas*, and I am in the

guṇas; you are absorbed in your astonishing actions and I am a fool, worshipped by fools.)

Or his two qualities are contrasted with her two qualities in order. You are absorbed in your bliss. I am made of matter with material qualities. You are the Lord of the three worlds. I am served by the ignorant and am ignorant.

Text 60.35

satyaṁ bhayād iva guṇebhya urukramāntaḥ
śete samudra upalambhana-mātra ātmā
nityaṁ kad-indriya-gaṇaiḥ kṛta-vigrahas tvaṁ
tvat-sevakair nṛpa-padaṁ vidhutaṁ tamo ʼndham

Yes, my Lord Urukrama, you lay down within the ocean as if afraid of the material modes, and thus in pure consciousness you appear within the heart as the Supersoul. You are always battling against the foolish material senses, and even your servants reject the privilege of royal dominion, which leads to the blindness of ignorance.

COMMENTARY: It is true. You rest internally. Why? Because of fear of the *guṇas*. Why? You fear being touched by the faults of matter, situated outside. But this is only apparent (*iva*). Actually, you are not afraid of being touched by the *guṇas*. You have great prowess (*urukrama*). *Guṇebhyaḥ* also refers to kings, since the kings use six *guṇas* or strategies in ruling.

You oppose the material senses which are strong. Thus, you (*ātmā*) situate yourself internally as the perceiver only, the form of pure knowledge (*upalambhana-mātrah*). *Ātmā* is used to show respect.

Or *bhavān* can be implied from the previous verse. In this case, *ātmā* means yourself or the *antaryāmī.* The word *satyam* (it is true) is understood in the later statements as well. You oppose the material senses or persons like Narakāsura, absorbed in sense enjoyments, since they cause suffering. Or they oppose you, since they do not respect you. In verse 12, Kṛṣṇa mentioned that he made enemies with the strong.

Kingdoms are rejected by your servants, those engaged in serving you with devotion, since they also are situated internally and oppose the material senses, because great evil arises by lack of internal vision with a focus on

external enjoyment. They reject kingdoms because the kingdoms create enjoyment for the senses.

Text 60.36

tvat-pāda-padma-makaranda-juṣāṁ munīnāṁ
vartmāsphuṭaṁ nr-paśubhir nanu durvibhāvyam
yasmād alaukikam ivehitam īśvarasya
bhūmaṁs tavehitam atho anu ye bhavantam

Your movements, inscrutable even for sages who relish the honey of your lotus feet, are certainly incomprehensible for human beings who behave like animals. And just as your activities are transcendental, O all-powerful Lord, so too are those of your followers.

COMMENTARY: *Jñānīs* (*munīnām*) also, by association with devotees, relish the honey or *bhakti-rasa* from your lotus feet. The devotees of course relish this, and more so your close associates. *Nanu* is an exclamation in *prema* or means "certainly." Your conduct is independent (*asphuṭam*) of them, just as persons intoxicated with liquor fail to act according to normal rules, not thinking clearly. Your conduct cannot be understood by persons who are like animals. It can be understood by persons having proper intelligence, since they are not qualified for regular duties.

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

As long as one does not become detached from daily (nitya) and periodic (naimittika) duties or has not awakened his faith in hearing topics about me, one must perform one's prescribed duties of *varṇāśrama.* SB 11.20.9

One may speculate about a person's intentions. Though it is said that one should know *karma* and *vikarma* (BG 4.17), some devotee may even engage in *vikarma.* This verse answers the statement in verse 13 *aloka-patham īyuṣām:* women suffer from men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society. *Alaukikam īhitam* means conduct which is beyond the material world. But this is only apparent (*iva*), since you generally act properly, so that people can follow such conduct. Or *alaukikam* can means "not in excess of what is commonly said or done." This is because you have unlimited greatness (*bhūman*). If you were bound

by the rules of the world, you would be limited. You are qualified for activities beyond this world.

Or your conduct is independent because your actions are certainly (*iva*) beyond this world. *Iva* here means *eva.* Even the devotees' actions are beyond the world. Thus the answer has been given to *aloka-patham īyūṣam* in verse 13. Or *aspaṣṭha-vartmanām* is answered with *alaukikam īhitam.* This is certain (*nanu*).

Text 60.37

niṣkiñcano nanu bhavān na yato 'sti kiñcid
yasmai baliṁ bali-bhujo 'pi haranty ajādyāḥ
na tvā vidanty asu-tṛpo 'ntakam āḍhyatāndhāḥ
preṣṭho bhavān bali-bhujām api te 'pi tubhyam

You possess nothing because there is nothing beyond you. Even the great enjoyers of tribute—Brahmā and other demigods—pay tribute to you. Those who are blinded by their wealth and absorbed in gratifying their senses do not recognize you in the form of death. But to the gods, the enjoyers of tribute, you are the dearest, as they are to you.

COMMENTARY: Certainly (*nanu*) you are "without anything" since there is nothing except you. "But *niskiñcana* means poor." Even Brahmā pays you tribute. Understanding one's future death, one should know you as death also. But the blind do not know this. Or they do not know you—from whom there is happiness (*ka*) even in death, by remembering you. They are absorbed in enjoying their senses, because they are blinded by wealth, without knowledge. But you are dear to the *devatās* like Brahmā, who have all wealth, since they are the best of beings, or are without *ahaṅkāra*. The word *api* in both cases indicates the prominence of the *devatās.*

Or what to speak of the *devatās* offering you homage. Those who have given up everything for you offer you homage and are dear to you. Though Brahmā has wealth, he does not enjoy his senses, since he is not blinded by his wealth. Thus, by knowledge he worships you. Praise of the Lord being dear comes at the end of the verse (generally answering verse 14), but refers to verse 13 concerning woman attached to Kṛṣṇa's feet. Thus the answers are not always in order since she speaks with agitation.

Those blinded by wealth do not know you, who are worshipped by the *devatās.* That is suitable since you are dear to the *devatās* and not dear to those blinded by wealth.

Text 60.38

tvaṁ vai samasta-puruṣārtha-mayaḥ phalātmā
yad-vāñchayā su-matayo visṛjanti kṛtsnam
teṣāṁ vibho samucito bhavataḥ samājaḥ
puṁsaḥ striyāś ca ratayoḥ sukha-duḥkhinor na

You are the embodiment of all human goals and are yourself the final aim of life. Desiring to attain you, O all-powerful Lord, intelligent persons abandon everything else. It is they who are worthy of your association, not men and women absorbed in the pleasure and grief resulting from their mutual lust.

COMMENTARY: It is well known that you are deeply endowed with all the *puruṣārthas* and also with *bhakti,* because you are the end result, bliss (*phalātmā*). You are the cause of bliss for some, and the very form of direct bliss for some. They all obtain bliss from you. Or you give results. You are the means to the result and the result. Thus the intelligent (*sumatayaḥ*) give up all other means.

Or the result of the four *vargas* is *bhakti* or *prema*. You are the soul of *prema*. Just by desiring you, they give up everything, what to speak of giving up everything on attaining you. They become indifferent to the body, to everything related to the body, to wealth, to life in this world and the next, and to liberation, since it is all trifling, giving suffering. They have everything, since you are dear to them.

She answers verse 15: marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny.

O Kṛṣṇa, pervading everywhere (*vibho*)! O Lord of the universe! You are suitable for them since you have no desire for wealth. You are similar to them. Or O complete Lord (*vibho*)! You have no need for wealth. Though they have given up everything, in worshipping with various desires, you respond by giving them results. Thus you are suitable for them completely

(*samucitaḥ*). Men and women who do not renounce everything (*ratayoḥ*) are suitable to experience happiness which is simply an escape from suffering, and experience suffering. Or those who experience suffering even in their happiness but are absorbed in that pursuit (*ratayoḥ*) are not qualified for your association.

Text 60.39

tvaṁ nyasta-daṇḍa-munibhir gaditānubhāva
ātmātma-daś ca jagatām iti me vṛto 'si
hitvā bhavad-bhruva udīrita-kāla-vega-
dhvastāśiṣo 'bja-bhava-nāka-patīn kuto 'nye

Knowing that great sages who have renounced the *sannyāsī's daṇḍa* proclaim your glories, that you are the Supreme Soul of all the worlds, and that you are so gracious that you give away even your own self, I chose you as my husband, rejecting Brahmā and the rulers of heaven, whose aspirations are all frustrated by the force of time, which is born from your eyebrows. What interest, then, could I have in any other suitors?

COMMENTARY: Your glories are sung even by sannyāsīs who aspire for liberation (*nyasta-daṇḍa*), what to speak of Nārada and others who disregard liberation. What is that glory? You are the *ātmā*, the *antaryāmī,* the Lord. And you give yourself (*ātma-daḥ*). You are chosen by me. The choice is fixed.

As the instigator of time, you are not controlled by time or limited by time. You exist eternally in Vaikuṇṭha. The aspirations of Brahmā and others remain only for the time that you move your eyebrow. I reject Brahmā, what to speak of Indra and the other *devatās.* Śiva is not mentioned since he is included in the *devatās.*

Text 60.40

jāḍyaṁ vacas tava gadāgraja yas tu bhūpān
vidrāvya śārṅga-ninadena jahartha māṁ tvam
siṁho yathā sva-balim īśa paśūn sva-bhāgaṁ
tebhyo bhayād yad udadhiṁ śaraṇaṁ prapannaḥ

My Lord, as a lion drives away lesser animals to claim his proper tribute, you drove off the assembled kings with the resounding twang of your Śārṅga bow and then claimed me, your fair share. Thus it is sheer foolishness, my dear Gadāgraja, for you to say you took shelter in the ocean out of fear of those kings.

COMMENTARY: *Tu* indicates that the event is contrary to perception. You stole me, because I belonged to you (*sva-bhāgam*). Otherwise, you would lose your fame. This description is given at the end, out of embarrassment. O Gadāgraja! Even your younger brother Gada all alone was capable of driving them off. You are even more capable, since you are endowed with unlimited powers (*īśa*).

Text 60.41

yad-vāñchayā nṛpa-śikhāmaṇayo 'nga-vainya-
jāyanta-nāhuṣa-gayādaya aikya-patyam
rājyaṁ visṛjya viviśur vanam ambujākṣa
sīdanti te nu padavīṁ ta ihāsthitāḥ kim

Wanting your association, the best of kings—Aṅga, Vainya, Jāyanta, Nāhuṣa, Gaya and others—abandoned their absolute sovereignty and entered the forest. How could those kings, fixed at your feet suffer frustration in this world, O lotus-eyed one?

COMMENTARY: *Yad* is the correlative of *te* in the sentence. The best of kings, possessing kingdoms, gave up their kingdoms which they controlled completely (*eka-patyam*) and entered the forest. Or *te* distinguishes these kings from Jarāsandha. *Ādayaḥ* indicates Priyavrata and others. *Nu* indicates a question or can form the phrase *anupadavīm*. Will those who are situated on your path suffer (*anupadavīm*), even in the forest (*iha*)? O lotus eyed lord! They wait to see your beauty.

Text 60.42

kānyaṁ śrayeta tava pāda-saroja-gandham
āghrāya san-mukharitaṁ janatāpavargam
lakṣmy-ālayaṁ tv avigaṇayya guṇālayasya
martyā sadoru-bhayam artha-vivikta-dṛṣṭiḥ

The aroma of your lotus feet, which is glorified by great saints, awards people liberation and is the abode of Lakṣmī. What woman would disregard that fragrance and take shelter of any other man after savoring that aroma, since you are the abode of unlimited qualities? The fools who concentrate on material wealth are filled with great fear.

COMMENTARY: Smelling the fragrance of even one foot—attaining, even by hearing from far off, even a slight relationship with you, what to speak of directly attaining you—who would take shelter of anything else? Even the fragrance is endowed with all your qualities (*guṇālayasya*). The fragrance awards liberation and is the abode of Lakṣmī. Therefore, it is praised by Nārada and other sages. Who would disrespect the fragrance of you, the abode of qualities, and take shelter of something else? Everyone should take shelter of you, because those who are subject to death (*martyāḥ*) like Mārkaṇḍeya are delivered. They see the highest goal.

Others cannot protect one or give the highest benefit. Why take shelter of one who is always in great fear (*anyam sadoru-bhayam*)? Or that fragrance is glorified even by those who are silent (*sat*). Or that fragrance causes the devotees (*jana*) to reject (*varga*) impersonal realization typified by or generated by austerities (*tāpa*). That fragrance is the abode of all wealth (*lakṣmyālayam*). The order of the list is with increasing excellence.

Text 60.43

taṁ tvānurūpam abhajaṁ jagatām adhīśam
ātmānam atra ca paratra ca kāma-pūram
syān me tavāṅghrir araṇaṁ sṛtibhir bhramantyā
yo vai bhajantam upayāty anṛtāpavargaḥ

Because you are suitable for me, I have chosen you, the master and Supreme Soul of all the worlds, who fulfill our desires in this life and the next. May your feet, which give freedom from illusion by approaching their worshiper, give shelter to me, who have been wandering from one material situation to another.

COMMENTARY: I have chosen you, with the glories mentioned, who is thus suitable for me. The suitability is described. You are the lord of lords (*adhīśam*). Not only externally do you control but internally as well. You are

the *antaryāmī* (*ātmānam*), the supreme guru and friend, inspiring me to perform proper activities. You fulfill desires in this life and the next. The word *ca* is repeated to indicate that both are equally important. The three descriptive terms are in order of increasing excellence. Not only in this life do I worship you. I will worship you in future lives as well. She prays with humility, out of great *prema*, thinking that attaining him is very rare. May your lotus feet be my shelter, as I wander about in various births. How the Lord fulfills desires is shown. Those feet destroy the suffering of *saṁsāra* (*anṛtāpavargaḥ*). Or those feet cause liberation to be disregarded (*anṛta*).

Text 60.44

tasyāḥ syur acyuta nṛpā bhavatopadiṣṭāḥ
strīṇāṁ gṛheṣu khara-go-śva-viḍāla-bhṛtyāḥ
yat-karṇa-mūlam ari-karṣaṇa nopayāyād
yuṣmat-kathā mṛḍa-viriñca-sabhāsu gītā

O infallible Kṛṣṇa, let each of the kings you named become the husband of a woman whose ears have never heard your glories, which are sung in the assemblies of Śiva and Brahmā. After all, in the households of such women, these kings live like asses, oxen, dogs, cats and slaves.

COMMENTARY: O Acyuta, you are filled with the sweetness of extraordinary glories! Others are devoid of any good qualities and are wicked. That is shown. They are like animals in houses, dependent on women whose ears have not come near topics of you. Plural (*yuṣmat*) is used to show respect or to include the devotees.

Text 60.45

tvak-śmaśru-roma-nakha-keśa-pinaddham antar
māṁsāsthi-rakta-kṛmi-viṭ-kapha-pitta-vātam
jīvac-chavaṁ bhajati kānta-matir vimūḍhā
yā te padābja-makarandam ajighratī strī

A woman who fails to relish the fragrance of the honey of your lotus feet becomes totally befooled, and thus she accepts as her husband or lover a living corpse covered with skin, whiskers, nails, head-hair and body-hair and filled with flesh, bones, blood, parasites, feces, mucus, bile and air.

COMMENTARY: One should not say that a woman does not approach you because you are invisible. You are glorified everywhere by all people. The living corpse is shown in two ways: internally and externally. It is covered (*pinaddham*) by skin, body hairs like eyelashes (*roma*), etc. Otherwise it would be covered with millions of insects and flies attracted by the bad smell. The coverings over the flesh are mentioned from superior to inferior. Flesh and the rest are objects of greater and greater disgust.

The woman who does not smell the honey of the lotus feet of you who are endowed with eternity, knowledge and bliss is completely without intelligence (*vimūḍhāḥ*). You are completely different from the kings. You are excellent and they are disgusting. The women, thinking a particular man is beautiful (*kānta-matiḥ*), is actually foolish, being devoid of the fragrance of your lotus feet.

Text 60.46

astv ambujākṣa mama te caraṇānurāga
ātman ratasya mayi cānatirikta-dṛṣṭeḥ
yarhy asya vṛddhaya upātta-rajo-'ti-mātro
mām īkṣase tad u ha naḥ paramānukampā

O lotus-eyed one, though you are satisfied within yourself and thus rarely turn your attention toward me, please bless me with steady love for your feet. It is when you assume a predominance of passion in order to manifest the universe that you glance upon me, showing me what is indeed your greatest mercy.

COMMENTARY: Most beautiful Lord (*ambujākṣa*)! May I have attraction for your lotus feet! You do not pay much attention to me, your wife, since you are absorbed in yourself (*ratasya*). When you assume prominent passion to increase your devotees, you glance at me, Lakṣmī, in the form of *prakṛti. Prakṛti* is Lakṣmī's *aṁśa.* Or you depend on me, for manifesting the main *vibhūtis.* "Since I am absorbed in myself, this glance will not take place." You assume the mode of rajas.

Or you do this to increase the Yadu dynasty (*asya vṛddhayaḥ*). Since the Lord is beyond the *guṇas*, the increase in rajas mentioned is spiritual,

included in the qualities of eternity, knowledge and bliss. That is explained in *Bhāgavatāmṛta*.

This is your great mercy to us – me and my friends. That mercy is very rare (*parama*). Or O lotus eyed Lord! Seeing your beauty is a great attainment, by having an attachment to your feet. Or when you wear your peacock feather, *guñja* necklace, garland and cloth (*mātrā*), and are covered by dust (*rajo*) raised by the cows when accepting cowherd pastimes for increasing attraction, you glance at me. *Mātrā* can mean clothing according to Viśva. Or covered with dust when accepting to herd cows (*upātta-rajo atimātrā*), you glance at me.

Text 60.47

naivālīkam ahaṁ manye vacas te madhusūdana
ambāyā eva hi prāyaḥ kanyāyāḥ syād ratiḥ kvacit

Actually, I don't consider your words false, Madhūsudana. Quite often an unmarried girl is attracted to a man, as in the case of Ambā.

COMMENTARY: O Lord, keeping your word in giving a boon to the great demon Madhu (*madhusūdana*)! *Madhusūdana* also means a bee. Like the bee, the Lord takes the nectar. Therefore, I do not think your words are displeasing. The mind of a young girl like Ambā is very fixed, for generally she is attracted to a certain man. Another girl is attracted to another man.

Text 60.48

vyūḍhāyāś cāpi puṁścalyā mano 'bhyeti navaṁ navam
budho 'satīṁ na bibhṛyāt tāṁ bibhrad ubhaya-cyutaḥ

The mind of a promiscuous woman always hankers for new lovers, even if she is married. An intelligent man should not keep such an unchaste wife, for if he does, he will lose his good fortune both in this life and the next.

COMMENTARY: The mind of a prostitute, of evil nature, even if married, is attracted (*abhiyāti*) or goes without fear to newer lovers. She gives up the old lover and accepts another man. The intelligent person should not keep her in his house. He should reject her, if he is intelligent. Or "How should one know the nature of the woman?" He should be intelligent.

Text 60.49

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
sādhvy etac-chrotu-kāmais tvaṁ rāja-putrī pralambhitā
mayoditaṁ yad anvāttha sarvaṁ tat satyam eva hi

The Supreme Lord said: O saintly lady, O princess, I deceived you only because I wanted to hear you speak like this. Indeed, everything you said in reply to my words is most certainly true.

COMMENTARY: O excellent woman (*sādhvi*)! The answers you give should be excellent. That is suitable since you are a princess. Therefore, I (*asmābhiḥ*) desired to hear these words. He speaks in the plural to indicate respect for himself as he respectfully desires to hear. *Hi* indicates certainty. There is no doubt that what you have said is true.

Text 60.50

yān yān kāmayase kāmān mayy akāmāya bhāmini
santi hy ekānta-bhaktāyās tava kalyāṇi nityada

Whatever qualities you hope for in order to become free of material desires are eternally present in you, O angry woman, for you are my unalloyed devotee.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Since I am most pleased with you, what benediction should I give you? Whatever qualities and wealth you desire for pastimes of *prema* (*akāmāya*) are yours. This is understood from *akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā:* one should worship the Lord whether having no desires or all desires. (SB 2.3.10)

O *kāmini* (alternative to *bhāmini*)! You are a most excellent young girl qualified for my service since you have *prema* for me. Or, you are most dear to me because of your equal love for me, who have love for you. If the version is *bhāmini* (O angry woman!) then he describes her condition to appease her anger. These qualities exist in you as your nature (*eva*). They are eternally present. You desire qualities for pastimes of *prema* because

you are endowed with *niṣkāma-bhakti* (*ekānta-bhaktāyāḥ*). Therefore, you are eternally auspicious. O most auspicious woman (*kalyāṇi*)!

Text 60.51

upalabdhaṁ pati-prema pāti-vratyaṁ ca te 'naghe
yad vākyaiś cālyamānāyā na dhīr mayy apakarṣitā

O sinless one, I have now seen firsthand the pure love and chaste attachment you have for your husband. Even though shaken by my words, your prema for me did not decrease.

COMMENTARY: The *prema* that you have for your husband was attained with skill or dear to me, quickly and easily (*upalabdham*). Or "Let that be. Give your acceptance with your mouth." I have directly realized your *prema*. What is the use of accepting it? It is like grinding what is already ground. By my statements, which were not true, your mind did not decrease its *prema*. Rather that *prema* became most excellent. O Rukmiṇī! You do not consider the offenses of the devotees (*anagha*). Therefore, you should forgive my offense.

Text 60.52

ye māṁ bhajanti dāmpatye tapasā vrata-caryayā
kāmātmāno 'pavargeśaṁ mohitā mama māyayā

Although I have the power to award prema, lusty couples worship me with penance and vows in order to get material enjoyment. Such persons are bewildered by my illusory energy.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Having praised her devotion filled with love for him as a husband, in order to emphasize this, he criticizes materialists who worship him for their love in the material world. He criticizes the purpose of household life of both husband and wife. Couples who worship me by repeatedly performing *vratas* and austerities according to their *sva-dharma* with great attachment, with hearts absorbed in material enjoyment (*kāmātmānaḥ*), are completely bewildered by my *māyā*, though I am the giver of *prema*

(*apavarga īśam*). This refers to what was said about the Lord in his special manifestation in Ketumāla-varṣa:

striyo vratais tvā hṛṣīkeśvaraṁ svato
hy ārādhya loke patim āśāsate 'nyam
tāsāṁ na te vai paripānty apatyaṁ
priyaṁ dhanāyūṁṣi yato 'sva-tantrāḥ

Worshipping you, Hṛṣīkeśa, the natural controller of the senses, by performing vows, women in this world ask for a husband other than you. The husbands cannot protect their children, wealth or duration of life because they are dependent.

sa vai patiḥ syād akutobhayaḥ svayaṁ
samantataḥ pāti bhayāturaṁ janam
sa eka evetarathā mitho bhayaṁ
naivātmalābhād adhi manyate param

Since the Lord by nature has no fear, he protects all persons. He alone should be the husband. Otherwise there is mutual fear. The wise do not accept anything better than attaining you.

yā tasya te pāda-saroruhārhaṇaṁ
nikāmayet sākhila-kāma-lampaṭā
tad eva rāsīpsitam īpsito 'rcito
yad-bhagna-yācñā bhagavan pratapyate

O Lord! The woman who desires to worship your lotus feet has all her desires fulfilled. You also give the result to a woman who worships with a material desire, because when the result is finished, she will suffer. SB 5.18.19-21

Or special love for me, endowed with a wealth of *prema* as a husband, by a person who takes herself as a wife, is the best. Those who worship me for the pleasure of married life with me because of *prema* for me (*kāmātmanaḥ*) are not affected (*mā-ūhitāḥ)* by my *māyā*, though it is difficult to overcome.

Text 60.53

māṁ prāpya māniny apavarga-sampadaṁ
vāñchanti ye sampada eva tat-patim
te manda-bhāgā niraye 'pi ye nṛṇāṁ
mātrātmakatvān nirayaḥ su-saṅgamaḥ

O supreme reservoir of love, unfortunate are persons who even after obtaining me, the Lord of both liberation and material riches, hanker only for material treasures. These worldly gains can be found even in hell. Since such persons are obsessed with sense gratification, hell is a fitting place for them.

COMMENTARY: Some, attaining me, who can give the treasure of liberation or *prema*, who am their master, (*tat-patim*), since all the wealth is dependent on my desire, still desire wealth, and not me. They are unfortunate. I remove all faults and bestow all good qualities. Their wealth has no relationship with me. You are most fortunate to display anger with a desire to please me (*mānini*).

Or those who desire only material wealth are unfortunate. Or the verse condemns persons who desire liberation. Those who desire the wealth of liberation (*apavarga-sampadam*) are unfortunate because they do not have a wealth of *prema* (*asampadaḥ*), though they attain me, the giver of *prema* (*tat-patim*). Those who desire in this way are suited for hell. Or those who attain me as a husband have reached the highest goal. Those who desire the wealth of liberation (*apavarga-sampadam*) for attaining *prema* (*sampade*) are most fortunate (*amanda-bhāgyāḥ*).

Text 60.54

diṣṭyā gṛheśvary asakṛn mayi tvayā
kṛtānuvṛttir bhava-mocanī khalaiḥ
su-duṣkarāsau sutarāṁ durāśiṣo
hy asuṁ bharāyā nikṛtiṁ juṣaḥ striyāḥ

Fortunately, O mistress of the house, you have always rendered me faithful devotional service, which liberates one from material existence. This service is very difficult for the envious to perform, especially for a woman whose intentions are wicked, who lives only to gratify her bodily demands, and who indulges in duplicity.

COMMENTARY: By good fortune, you constantly serve me. This service liberates you from the fire of *saṁsāra* which obstructs *bhakti*. This indicates the *svarūpa* of such service. Or the service frees one from the material world. One becomes free of suffering by hearing and chanting. Those who find fault in others (*khalaiḥ*) cannot do this service. Those who desire material enjoyment (*durāśiśaḥ*) find it even more difficult. And those who cheat find it most difficult. By removing those faults, one becomes the best, pure woman. This strengthens his praise of her service (*anuvṛttiḥ*). O queen of the house! By your example, you are the queen of all houses, because you inspire service in all houses. Or, you are the ruler of the house and I am dependent on you.

Text 60.55

na tvādṛśīm praṇayinīṁ gṛhiṇīṁ gṛheṣu
paśyāmi mānini yayā sva-vivāha-kāle
prāptān nṛpān na vigaṇayya raho-haro me
prasthāpito dvija upaśruta-sat-kathasya

In all my palaces I can find no other wife as loving as you, O most respectful one. When you were to be married, you disregarded all the kings who had assembled to seek your hand, and simply because you had heard authentic accounts concerning me, you sent a *brāhmaṇa* to me with your confidential message.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

I cannot see such an affectionate wife in any house, or among all my palaces. When the time came for your marriage, you sent to me a messenger, one who bears a secret (*rahoharaḥ*). Another version has *raho aho*. The meaning is the same. This indicates that she disregarded her father and brother. You became attached from simply hearing about me within your room, without realizing my glories. Now, with the direct realization you are even more attached. O woman worthy of worship (*mānini*) or having an elevated mind! In this manner you are most qualified. Others are not.

Text 60.56

bhrātur virūpa-karaṇaṁ yudhi nirjitasya
prodvāha-parvaṇi ca tad-vadham akṣa-goṣṭhyām
duḥkhaṁ samuttham asaho 'smad-ayoga-bhītyā
naivābravīḥ kim api tena vayaṁ jitās te

When your brother, who had been defeated in battle and then disfigured, was later killed during a gambling match on Aniruddha's wedding day, you felt unbearable grief, yet out of fear of losing me you spoke not a word. By this silence you have conquered me.

COMMENTARY: (Jīva Gosvāmī's Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī commentary is almost the same as the commentary on this verse.)

Because he was your brother you had affection for him. His disfigurement was thus intolerable for you. He was defeated in battle. Since he was your brother, I should not have defeated him, even in battle. And having him killed on Aniruddha's wedding day was not proper, since you felt the most intolerable grief. But you did not speak out of worry that your master (*asmad*) should never be inattentive to you. *Asmad* (we) is used in the plural to indicate his associates as well. Separation from him would be complete if all his associates also left. We, not just myself, but all my associates, have been controlled by you, what to speak of being conquered by you. We do not have such power.

Text 60.57

dūtas tvayātma-labhane su-vivikta-mantraḥ
prasthāpito mayi cirāyati śūnyam etat
matvā jihāsa idaṁ aṅgam ananya-yogyaṁ
tiṣṭheta tat tvayi vayaṁ pratinandayāmaḥ

When you sent the messenger with your most confidential plan and yet I delayed going to you, you began to see the whole world as void and wanted to quit your body, which could never have been given to anyone but me. May this greatness of yours remain with you always; I can do nothing to reciprocate except joyfully thank you for your devotion.

COMMENTARY: The messenger had a secret or very colorful message (*suvivikta-mantraḥ*). Its secret nature indicates special *prema*. You considered the world (*etat*), containing father, mother and friends, to be

empty and wanted to give up your body because it should not be given to another person. I try to be happy with a reflection of the great bliss created by you.

I offer respects to the skillful couple whose exchange of words of *prema* is understood only by the couple themselves and which cannot be understood by others without *bhakti*.

Many other pastimes are indicated by this as well.

Text 60.58

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ saurata-saṁlāpair bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ
sva-rato ramayā reme nara-lokaṁ viḍambayan

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: And so the self-satisfied Supreme Lord, son of Devakī, enjoyed with the goddess of fortune, engaging her in lovers' talks, which resembled the ways of human society.

COMMENTARY: Though enjoying in himself, he enjoyed with Rukmiṇī (*ramayā*) because he was directly the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*), who appeared as the son of Devakī (*devakī-suta* instead of *jagad-īśvaraḥ*) to play. He imitated or confirmed (*viḍambayan*) his human pastimes. Or he derided the human world devoid of happiness by experiencing his pastimes. Or he fooled the human world, which saw his pastimes as only material love. The word *bhagavān* indicates his power. The combination of power with humanlike actions produces the greatest sweetness. This is because he was the son of Devakī.

Text 60.59

tathānyāsām api vibhur gṛhesu gṛhavān iva
āsthito gṛha-medhīyān dharmān loka-gurur hariḥ

The almighty Lord, the preceptor of all the worlds, similarly behaved like a conventional householder in the palaces of his other queens, performing the dharma of a family man.

COMMENTARY: *Atha* indicates auspiciousness or means "after enjoying with Rukmiṇī, the topmost consort."

Because he is the one Lord (*vibhuḥ*), he could expand in all the houses. This will be explained later. In all houses he behaved like a householder (*gṛhavān iva*) and performed actions according to Vedic rules for householders and actions filled with *prema* suitable for couples (*gṛha-medhīyān dharmān*), in order to teach the people (*loka-guruḥ*), because he removes all suffering (*hariḥ*). Or the word *reme* (enjoyed) from the previous verse is understood as well as the phrase "pastimes resembling the actions of ordinary people." Though he was full of all powers (*vibhuḥ*) he acted like a householder. This indicates sweetness.

I gather a little of the merciful remnants of the sweet conversations joyfully sipped by Śrīdhara Svāmī.

---

[1]These are the *pañca-yajñas*: offerings to Brahman by chanting the Vedas, offerings to the *devatās* by *arcana*, offerings to the Pitṛs by *tarpaṇa*, offerings to guests by food, and offerings to animals by food

About the Author-Translator

His Holiness Bhanu Swami maharaja was born in Canada on the 26th December 1948 to the most fortunate Japanese parents. HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja is one of the senior disciples of His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, founder acharya of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He holds a BA Degree in Oriental fine arts history from the University of British Colombia. He joined the Hare Krishna movement in India in 1970. Initiated in 1971 by Srila Prabhupada, he took sannyasa vows in 1984. Bhanu Swami was personally instructed in the art of Deity worship by Srila Prabhupada, and within ISKCON he has become an authority on the topic. He is a great inspiration for many devotees around the world and he preaches Krishna consciousness in Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Russia and India.

HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja met the disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada in 1971 in Tokyo, just after his graduation in history. Srila Prabhupada was about to set on his India tour with his Western disciples and Bhanu Maharaja joined with them.

By 1972, His Holiness Bhanu Swami maharaja already earned credit from Srila Prabhupada for his exact Sanskrit pronunciation, expertise in cooking and excellence in deity worship. He also began to translate Srila Prabhupada's books into Japanese.

He continues with this translation service to this day, giving us the nectar from the Bengali and Sanskrit works of the previous Vaishnava acharyas to enhance our understanding of the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. He is also a member of the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON.

His other works are listed here - https://www.amazon.com/author/hhbhanuswami